FRIENDS
OF ACPL

PUBLIC LIBRARY

398 C83
Cox & Jones 4931
Romance of the Middle Ages

ANNEX

DO NOT REMOVE CARDS FROM POCKET

PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE AND ALLEN COUNTY, IND.

PUBLIC LIBRARY
FRIENDS
OF ACPL

POPULAR ROMANCES

OF THE

MIDDLE AGES

POPULAR ROMANCES

OF THE

MIDDLE AGES

BY

SIR GEORGE W. COX, M.A., BART.
AUTHOR OF "A MANUAL OF MYTHOLOGY," ETC.

AND

EUSTACE HINTON JONES

FIRST AMERICAN, FROM THE SECOND ENGLISH EDITION

398
C83

NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1886

TROW'S
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY,
NEW YORK.

PREFACE.

THIS volume, it is believed, contains all the most important tales which formed the great body of mediæval legend or folk lore. For many centuries these tales had for our forefathers an irresistible charm: but not a few of them are known to Englishmen of the present day little more than in name. But for all who read them they must possess their old interest; and even over those who are unacquainted with the time-honoured romances, the heroes whose names they bear exercise in some faint measure the power of old associations. The wisdom of Merlin, the bravery of Bors and Guy, have almost passed into proverbs; and to not a few, probably, the name of Olger will bring up the image of the mighty Dane wrapped in the charmed slumber in which he lifts his mace once only in seven years. But a more potent spell is linked with the thought of Roland the brave and true, the peerless Paladin who fell on Roncesvalles.

The tales contained in this volume are partly found in books not easily accessible, or have assumed forms which tend to make them monotonous or wearisome; and in the Arthur story, as related especially by Sir Thomas Malory, the evil becomes well-nigh intolerable. Hence the thought that these old romances may be presented to modern readers in a form which shall retain their real vigour without the repulsive characteristics imposed on them by a comparatively rude and ignorant age, may not,

perhaps, be regarded as inexcusably presumptuous. With greater confidence it may be said that, if we turn to these old legends or romances at all, it should be for the purpose of learning what they really were, and not with any wish of seeing them through a glass which shall reflect chiefly our own thoughts about them, and throw over them a colouring borrowed from the sentiment of the nineteenth century.

These two conditions have, it is hoped, been strictly observed in the versions here given of these romances. While special care has been taken to guard against the introduction even of phrases not in harmony with the original narratives, not less pains have been bestowed on the task of preserving all that is essential in the narrative; and thus it may perhaps be safely said that the readers of this volume will obtain from it some adequate knowledge of the tales without having their attention and their patience overtaxed by a multiplicity of superfluous and therefore irksome details. Of the present version of the Arthur story, the most celebrated perhaps of all, it may be enough to say that it relates many important episodes which have been omitted in the versions recently published, while no attempt has been made to impart to the romance a more historical complexion than that which it received at the hands of Caxton's friend.

G. W. C.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS—	
I.—The Crowning of Arthur	1
II.—The Story of Balin and Balan	7
III.—The Wedding of Arthur and Guenevere	12
IV.—The Treason of Morgan le Fay	15
V.—The Crowning of Arthur at Rome	23
VI.—The Exploits of Sir Lancelot du Lake	25
VII.—The Story of Sir Gareth of Orkney	28
VIII.—The History of Sir Tristram	41
IX.—The Madness of Sir Tristram	49
X.—The Treasons of King Mark and Palamides	54
XI.—The Birth of the Good Knight Galahad	63
XII.—The Finding of Lancelot	67
XIII.—The Shriving of Sir Lancelot	70
XIV.—The Temptation of Sir Percivale	76
XV.—The Vision of Sir Lancelot	79
XVI.—The Trial of Sir Bors	81
XVII.—The Achieving of the Sangreal	85
XVIII.—The Story of the Maid of Astolat	91
XIX.—The Judgment of Queen Guenevere	97
XX.—The Siege of Joyous Gard	101
XXI.—The Last Days of Arthur, Guenevere, and Lancelot	109
MERLIN	115
SIR TRISTREM	123
BEVIS OF HAMTOUN	140
GUY OF WARWICK	162
HAVELOK	179
BEOWULF	189
ROLAND	202
OLGER THE DANE	223

PAGE

THE STORIES OF THE VOLSUNGS—
I.—The Story of Sigmund and Signy . . . 240
II.—The Story of Helgi Hundingsbane . . . 248
III.—The Story of Sigurd and Brynhild . . . 250
IV.—The Fall of the Giukings 268

THE NIBELUNG STORY—
I.—The Wedding of the Queens 277
II.—The Crosslet on the Vesture 288
III.—The Vengeance of Kriemhild 300

WALTER OF AQUITAINE—
I.—The Betrothal of Walter and Hildegund . . 316
II.—The Battle for the Golden Hoard . . . 320
III.—The Wedding of Walter and Hildegund in the Basqueland 331

THE STORY OF HUGDIETRICH AND HILDEBURG . 333

THE GUDRUN LAY—
I.—Hagen and the Griffins 341
II.—Hilda's Wooing 346
III.—Gudrun's Lovers 351

THE STORY OF FRITHJOF AND INGEBJORG . . 372

GRETTIR THE STRONG—
I.—The Winning of the Short Sword . . . 400
II.—The Slaying of Biorn 407
III.—The Curse of Glam 411
IV.—Grettir's Ill Luck 416
V.—The Hunting of the Outlaw 423
VI.—The Ladders upon Drangey 439
VII.—The Notch in the Short Sword 448
VIII.—The Happy Good Luck of Thorstein . . . 452

GUNNLAUG AND THE FAIR HELGA 458

BURNT NJAL—
I.—The Story of Gunnar, Njal's Friend . . . 475
II.—The Burning of Njal 486

POPULAR ROMANCES OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

The Story of King Arthur and his Knights.

CHAPTER I.

THE CROWNING OF ARTHUR.

UTHER PENDRAGON lay sick with love and sorrow, for the lady Igerne would not hearken to the words which he had spoken to her, and she had gone away with her husband Gorlois, the Duke of Cornwall, who placed her in the castle of Tintagil, in the Cornish land, while he shut himself up in another castle called Dimilioc. When the knight Ulfin saw that his lord Uther was sick, he asked what ailed him; and when he knew that the king longed for the love of Igerne, he went to the wise Merlin who knew the things that were to come; and Merlin promised that the king should have his heart's desire. So he brought it about that Uther went to the castle of Tintagil in the likeness of Gorlois, who had just been slain behind the battlements of Dimilioc; and Igerne welcomed Uther, thinking that in very truth her husband stood before her.

On the next day the tidings came to Igerne that her husband had been slain three hours before Uther entered the gates of Dimilioc; and she marvelled who it might be that had come to her in the guise of her lord. But soon there came messengers from Uther who told her of the love which the king bare to her, and Igerne became the queen of the land.

When the time drew near that her child should be born, Merlin the sage came to the king and asked that the babe should be given to him at the postern gate of the palace unchristened.

And the king promised, and so when the child was born, it was wrapped in cloth of gold and given to Merlin, who placed it in the hands of a true and faithful man named Sir Ector: and Sir Ector's wife nourished the babe, until after a great fight at St Albans Uther Pendragon came back to London, and there fell sick unto death. But before he died, he charged his nobles and great men that they should make Arthur king in his stead. Howbeit, when he was dead, many strove to be chosen king, and the Bishop of Canterbury bade that all the lords of the realm should come up to London at Christmas on pain of cursing. So at Christmas tide, they were gathered together in the great church; and when the mass was done, there was seen in the churchyard against the high altar a great stone four square, and in the midst was like an anvil of steel, and therein was stuck a fair sword, naked, by the point, and about the sword there were written letters in gold which said, 'Whoso pulleth this sword out of this stone and anvil is rightwise born King of all England.'

But of all the lords there was not one who could move the sword; and the Bishop said, 'He is not here that shall draw out the sword, but doubt not God will make him known.' Then by his counsel ten knights were named to guard the stone; but though they kept watch day by day, none came who could pull out the weapon. At the last Sir Ector journeyed to London with his son Sir Kay, and with them went Arthur his foster-brother. As they went on their road, Sir Kay perceived that he had left his sword at home, and prayed Arthur to hasten back and fetch it. But when Arthur reached the house, there was none within, for all were gone to see the jousting. Then in his wrath he said within himself, 'I will ride to the churchyard and take the sword that is fixed in the stone, for my brother shall not lack a sword this day.' So Arthur hastened to the churchyard, and found no knights there, for they too were gone to the jousts; and when he seized the sword, it came out of the stone lightly at his touch, and he carried it to Sir Kay, who took it to his father and said, 'Here is the sword of the stone, and I must be king of the land.' But his father took him into the church and made him say before the altar how he came by the sword; and so it was made known that Arthur had drawn it forth. Then said Ector, 'Arthur must be king of the land, if he can place the sword back again where it was and once more draw it forth.' So Arthur placed the sword again in the stone, and when Ector strove to pull it out, he could not do so, neither could Sir Kay; but whenever Arthur touched it, it came forth

lightly as a feather. Then knelt Sir Ector before his foster child, and said, 'Now know I thou art of an higher blood than I had thought; and therefore it was that Merlin brought thee to me.' But Arthur was grieved when he learnt that Sir Ector was not indeed his father nor Ector's wife his mother.

Yet for all this the lords strove that Arthur should not be king, for they held it shame to be governed by a boy of no high blood born; and thus, though all failed to pull out the sword, yet from Twelfth-day to Candlemas, from Candlemas till the high feast of Easter, and from Easter till Pentecost, they put off the crowning of Arthur; but at Pentecost, when still Arthur alone was able to draw forth the sword, the people cried out all, 'We will have Arthur for our king. It is the will of God.' So was Arthur crowned, and he sware to keep the laws and deal true justice between man and man, and he redressed all the wrongs that had been done throughout the land since the days of King Uther. Then Arthur made his foster-brother seneschal of England, and Sir Baldwin was made constable, and Sir Ulfin chamberlain: and the people loved their king, and evil-doers feared him because of his might and his righteousness.

Not long after this, Arthur held high feast at Caerleon,[1] and thither hastened chieftains from Lothian and Orkney, from Gower and Carados, and to them Arthur sent precious gifts. But the kings evil-intreated the messengers who bare them, and bade them go back and say that they would have no gifts of a beardless boy that was come of low blood, but that they were coming to give him gifts of hard blows between the shoulders. Then Arthur shut himself up with five hundred knights in a great tower, to which the kings laid siege, though Merlin the sage warned them that they could not withstand the might of Arthur. But they laughed him to scorn, and said, 'Shall we be afraid of a dream-reader?' Then Merlin vanished from among them,

[1] Of the geography of the Arthur romance it may be said that the comparative mythologist who has ascertained that the story with which he deals has its origin in the phenomena of cloudland will be disposed to spend little time on the profitless task of inquiring whether towns and hamlets bearing historical names have been rightly placed or not. All that Sir Henry Strachey can say on this subject is that "the geography of Arthur's Roman war is very coherent; but that of the rest of the book it is often impossible to harmonise." (*Morte d'Arthur*, xi.) In all likelihood the episode of the Roman war was put together by some one familiar with the imperial tradition which English kings were pleased to maintain from the days of Ecgberht onwards—Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, i. 158, et seq.; *Edinburgh Review*, July 1869, p. 188.

and came to Arthur and bade him set on fiercely, but not to use the sword which he had got by miracle, unless he should be sore pressed. So forthwith Arthur came down upon them and there was a fierce battle, until at last the Chief of Lothian smote down the king; and the king drew his sword, which flashed in the eyes of his enemies like the blaze of thirty torches, and at each stroke of the sword a man died, till the kings fled with the knights that were left alive, and Merlin counselled Arthur to follow them no further, but to send messengers to King Ban of Berwick and King Bors of Gaul, promising that he would aid them in their wars against King Claudas if they would help him against the Kings of Lothian and Orkney and their friends. So King Ban and King Bors came; and the six kings who had fled away from Arthur got five other kings to join with them under an oath that they should not leave each other till they should have slain Arthur, who was now in the castle of Bedegraine in the forest of Sherwood. Thither hastened the eleven kings with their men, and there was fierce fighting in which King Ban and King Bors wrought mightily for the king, and Arthur himself smote on until of threescore thousand he had left but fifteen thousand alive, so that Merlin rebuked him and said, 'God is wroth with thee that thou wilt never have done, for yonder eleven kings cannot be overthrown now; but go now whither thou mayest list for they shall not lift hand against thee for three years.'

When Merlin was now gone to his master Blaise who dwelt in Northumberland, and wrote down all that befell King Arthur, there came the daughter of the Earl Sanam, to do homage, as others did after the great battle: and Arthur set his love upon the damsel, and she became the mother of Borre, who was afterward a good knight of the Round Table. Then Arthur rode to Caerleon, and thither came the wife of the King of Orkney with her four sons, Gawaine, Gaheris, Agravaine, and Gareth; and she was the sister of Arthur, though he knew it not, for she was the daughter of Igerne; and she was so fair that the king cast great love upon her also. But withal there came heavy dreams which made him sad at heart, and when by and by he rode long after a strange beast, and then rested by a fountain, a knight came and took away the king's horse; and while one went to fetch it back, Merlin stood before the king, like a child fourteen years old, and told him that Uther and Igerne were his father and his mother. But Arthur laughed the child to scorn, and Merlin vanished, and came again in the form of a man fourscore years old, and told him the same words. Further he said,

'God is displeased with you for the deed ye have done of late, and thy sister's child shall destroy you and all the knights of your realm.'

Then Arthur sent for Igerne, for he said, 'If she too says that I am her child, I shall believe it;' and when she came with her daughter Morgan le Fay, Ulfin charged her with treason, because she had not spoken the truth from the first, and because Arthur's lords had withstood him, not knowing whose son he was, and because they would not be ruled by a base-born boy. Then Igerne told all the story, how, when the child was born, Uther bade that it should be given to Merlin, and how she never saw the babe again, or wot what had become of him; and Ector also told how he had received the child at Merlin's hands, and nourished him by the king's command. Then Arthur took his mother in his arms and kissed her, and they wept on each other for the greatness of their joy.

After this, there came from the Emperor of Rome twelve knights who asked of Arthur homage for his realm; and the king answered that because they were messengers they should live, and bade them tell their master that he would give him homage on a fair field with a sharp spear and a sharp sword. So the messengers departed; and as Arthur rode away he came to a place where a knight stood who suffered none to pass unless they first crossed spears with him. Then was there a long and fierce fight between them, until the knight smote Arthur's sword in two pieces, and sware to slay him unless he would yield himself as conquered. 'Death is welcome,' said Arthur, when it comes; but as for yielding to thee, I would rather die than be so shamed;' and therewith rushing on the knight he seized him by the middle and threw him down, and took away his helmet. Yet was not the knight overcome, albeit he was sore dismayed; and he had well nigh slain Arthur, when Merlin came and bade him stay his hand. 'This knight,' he said, 'is a man of more worship than thou deemest.' 'Why, who is he?' said the knight. When Merlin said that it was King Arthur, the knight would have slain him forthwith because he feared his anger; but Merlin cast a spell upon him so that he fell to the earth in a great sleep. Then was Arthur wroth because he thought that Merlin had slain the brave knight; but the sage said, 'Fear not, he shall rise up again in three hours: and this knight, whose name is Pellinore, shall have two sons, Percivale and Lamorak, who shall be good men and true, and he shall tell you the name of your sister's son, that shall bring ruin to all this realm.'

Then with Merlin Arthur went to the abode of an hermit, who was also a great healer of men, and in three days he was healed of the wounds which Pellinore had given. But when he would go further, he said to Merlin, 'I have no sword;' and Merlin answered that he should have one by and by; and presently they came to a lake in the midst of which an arm was seen rising from the water, and bearing a sword aloft. 'Yonder,' said Merlin, 'is the sword of which I spake, and yonder is the Lady of the Lake, whose is that sword. Speak fair to her when she comes to you, that she may give it you.' Then after kindly greeting, Arthur besought her for the sword, and the maiden said, 'If thou wilt give me a gift when I ask for it, it shall be thine.' So the king sware unto her, and the maiden bade him row himself in a barge that lay near, and take the sword with its scabbard; and when Arthur laid his hand upon it, the hand that bare it up went under the water. On their way back they saw a rich pavilion, and when Arthur knew from Merlin that Pellinore lay within it, Arthur would have tried his new sword in fight with him; but Merlin said that so it must not be, and that hereafter the king would be right glad to give to Pellinore his sister for a wife. 'But which likest thou the better,' asked Merlin, 'the sword or the scabbard?' And Arthur said, 'The sword.' 'Ye are unwise,' answered the sage, 'for the scabbard is worth ten of the sword, for while ye have the scabbard upon you ye shall never lose blood, though thy wounds be never so sore; wherefore see that you keep the scabbard always with you.'

Then went Arthur to Caerleon; and thither came messengers from King Ryons, who said, 'Eleven kings have done me homage, and with their beards I have trimmed a mantle. Send me now thy beard, for there lacks yet one to the finishing of my mantle.' Then answered Arthur and said, 'Go tell your master my beard is full young yet to make a trimming of it; but yet a little while and he shall do me homage on his knees.'

Now Merlin had told the king that he who should destroy him should be born on May-day. Therefore Arthur charged that all the children born of lords and ladies on that day should be brought to him; and they were placed in a ship, and Mordred, the child of the wife of the King of Orkney, was sent with them. But the ship was driven against a castle, and broken in pieces, and all died save Mordred, whom a good man took up and nourished till he was fourteen years old.

CHAPTER II.

THE STORY OF BALIN AND BALAN.

Now it came to pass that while Arthur and his lords and knights tarried at Camelot, a damsel brought a message from the great Lady Lile of Avilion; and as she stood before the king she let fall her mantle, that was richly furred, and she was seen to be girt with a noble sword. Then the king marvelled greatly, and asked wherefore she, being a maiden, was thus girt with a sword. And the maiden said that the weapon gave her great sorrow and cumbrance, and that she could not be freed from the sword save by a good and true man without villainy and without treason. She told, moreover, how she had been at the court of King Ryons, and how no knight there was able to take the sword from her side. Then spake the king, 'I say not that I am the best knight, but I will essay to draw the sword, that at the least I may give an example to my barons.' But, though he strove mightily, the sword would not out, and the maiden said, 'Ye need not pull hard; the man that shall pull it out shall do it with little might.' But neither were any of the barons who stood round able to draw it forth; and the damsel took leave of the king to go upon her way. As she went, there stood before her a poor knight, named Balin, clad in a homely garment; and he had been prisoner half-a-year and more because he had slain a knight who was cousin to the king. But although he had been delivered out of prison, yet, for the poorness of his raiment he would not put himself far in the throng, though in his heart, he was sure that, if the chance were given to him, he could do as well as any knight that then was. At the first the damsel would not hearken to his prayer; but Balin bade her remember that righteousness lies not in a man's vesture, and that many a good man is not known unto all people. So she suffered him to try, and at his touch the sword came from her side, and she said, 'This is the best knight that ever I found; he shall do many good deeds.' Then she asked Balin to give her back the sword again; and when he would not yield it up, she said, 'Ye are not wise to keep the sword, for with it thou shalt slay thy best friend, and it shall be thy ruin.' So she went her way heavy and sorrowful.

Then would Balin go on his also, although the king sought to stay him because he had done him wrong; and Arthur besought him that at the least, if he went, he would not tarry away long.

But while Balin was making ready to depart, the Lady of the Lake came to demand of the king the gift which he promised to her when she gave him the sword Excalibur; and when Arthur bade her say what she would have, she desired the head of the maiden who had brought the sword to Balin, or the head of Balin himself. But when the knight heard this he went up to the lady and straightway smote off her head. Then was Arthur full of wrath, nor would he be soothed, although Balin told him she had destroyed many good knights, and had caused his mother to be burnt by her lies. And the king charged Balin to go from his court. So Balin went to his squire, and bade him bear the head to Northumberland, and tell his friends there that his worst foe was dead, and that he himself was out of prison. But the squire mourned that his master had displeased the king; and Balin said that he would go forth and do battle with King Ryons, so that Arthur might be gracious to him again if he came back conqueror.

But while the king was yet wroth with him, a knight named Lanceor besought Arthur that he might go after Balin and quit him for the despite which he had done in slaying the lady. Then, at Arthur's bidding, Lanceor, the Knight of Ireland, rode hastily after Balin, and challenged him to deadly combat, though Balin would fain have journeyed on in peace. But Lanceor would not let him go; and when they fought together the Knight of Ireland was slain. Presently a maiden came riding by, and when she saw the knight lying dead, she cried aloud for her anguish, and said, 'O Balin, thou hast slain two bodies and one heart, and two hearts in one body, and two souls hast thou lost!' And with these words she took the sword from her dead lover's hand and passed it through her own heart. Great was Balin's grief when he saw the twain lie dead together; but as in his sorrow he looked towards a great forest, he saw coming towards him his brother Balan, who first rejoiced to see Balin, and then mourned for the evil plight in which he found him. 'Let us go hence,' said Balin, when he had told him all the tale. 'King Ryons lays siege to the castle of Dimilioc, and by slaying him I trust to win back the king's grace.' But not far had they gone when they met a dwarf who came from the city of Camelot and who on hearing what had happened, told Balin that by slaying Lanceor he had done great damage to himself. 'Trust me,' he said, 'the kin of this knight will chase you through the world till they have slain you.' 'I fear not greatly for that,' answered Balin, 'but I grieve that I have displeased the king.'

There, on the spot where the knight Lanceor died and the maiden whom he loved slew herself, King Mark of Cornwall raised a fair tomb, and placed their bodies within it; and then Merlin told King Mark that the greatest battle should be fought that ever was or shall be betwixt the truest lovers, and yet neither of the knights should slay the other, and these should be Lancelot du Lake and Tristram. And to Balin Merlin said, 'Because thou hast slain this maiden, thou shalt strike a stroke the most dolorous that ever man struck, except the stroke of our Lord, for thou shalt hurt the truest knight that now lives, and bring three kingdoms into misery for twelve years.' After these words Merlin vanished away, and King Mark said to Balin, 'Tell me thy name.' Then said Balan, 'Ye see that he beareth two swords, and the Knight of the Two Swords you may call him.' But as the brothers rode away together, Merlin again came to them, and made them lie hidden in a wood among leaves beside the highway, that so they might fall upon King Ryons as he passed by. So when at midnight he came with threescore of his best knights, they slew his horsemen, and carried Ryons away, and gave him in charge to the porters of King Arthur. But Merlin hastened on before them to tell the king that his worst foe was taken. 'By whom?' asked the king. 'By two knights whose names thou shalt know on the morrow.' And on the morrow, when Arthur learnt that it was Balin with his brother Balan who had done him this service, he said that he had ill-deserved the kindness. 'He shall do yet more for thee,' said Merlin, 'for the brother of Ryons is even now at hand with a great host to do battle with thee to the death.'

In the fight which then came off the two brothers did wondrously: and the brother of King Ryons was worsted with all his host, because Merlin held back the King of Orkney and his people with a tale of prophecy, till the battle was well nigh done. And when at length the King of Orkney came to the fight, he was slain by Sir Pellinore, on whom Sir Gawaine, the king's son, ten years afterwards avenged his father's death. Twelve kings were killed in this battle: and for them Arthur made twelve tombs, each with an image holding a waxen taper, which Merlin said should burn no more when he was dead. Then the wise man charged the king to keep heedfully the scabbard of Excalibur, because he should lose no blood while he had this scabbard about him. So for great trust he took it to his sister Morgan le Fay: but Morgan loved another knight named Accolon better than Arthur or her husband Uriens, and to him she gave the

scabbard of Excalibur while she made another like it for her brother by inchantments.

Not many days after this, as Arthur lay sick in his tent, there passed by a knight in great sorrow, who gave no heed though the king strove to comfort him. Then Arthur bade Balin go and bring back the sorrowful knight; and when Balin came up to him, the knight promised to do as he desired, if Balin would be his warrant. So Balin sware to him; but for all this the knight was slain by the hand of one whom none might see; and as he fell he said, 'This is the deed of Garlon.' Then as Balin rode onward with the damsel who had loved the dead knight, and with another knight Perin of Montbeliard, the hand of Garlon unseen smote again and Perin fell dead: and Balin went on with the damsel alone, till they came to a castle, where the men seized the maiden and would not let her go till she had bled a silver dish full for the lady of the place, who was sick and who could in no other wise be healed, even as it befell afterwards the sister of Sir Percivale in the story of the Sangreal.

Yet a few days after this, Balin was lodged in the house of a man whose son had been smitten by the invisible knight, and could not be healed till he had drunk of that knight's blood. Then said Balin, 'This is Garlon, who has already slain two of my comrades, and I would rather slay him than have all the gold in the realm.' 'He shall come before thee,' said his host, 'in a feast which King Pellam will hold not many days hence.'

At that feast the invisible knight was slain; and King Pellam and his knights rose up fiercely against Balin, because he had killed their brother: and Balin put up his sword to ward off the stroke of King Pellam, but his sword was shivered in twain, and Balin ran from chamber to chamber seeking a new weapon, until he came to a chamber marvellously light, in which was a bed arrayed with cloth of gold, and by it a table of pure gold borne up by four pillars of silver, and on the table was a marvellous spear strangely wrought. Seizing this spear Balin smote Pellam; and this was the dolorous stroke: for thereon Pellam fell down in a swoon, and the castle roof and walls fell to the earth, and lay upon Pellam and Balin three days. At the end of these days came Merlin, who lifted them up, but Pellam lay many years sore wounded, till Galahad healed him in the quest of the Sangreal. Then Balin bade farewell to Merlin and said to him, 'In this world we meet never more;' but wherever he went, the people cried, 'O Balin, thy dolorous stroke hath brought us to ruin; and doubt not but the vengeance will fall on thee at the last.'

Glad was Balin to get out of these dismal lands: but when he had left them behind him, there were yet grievous things for him to see and to suffer. For first, a knight whom he had aided to find the maiden whom he loved, slew the damsel for her treachery, and then drave his sword into his own body; and next, Balin was intrapped into a fair castle, in which he saw an hundred ladies and many knights, with whom was dancing and minstrelsy and all manner of joy, and the lady of the castle told him that he must joust with a knight who kept an island, and another bade him leave his own shield and take from the wall another which was larger. So Balin did even as he bade him; and when he drew near to the island, a knight hastened towards him with spear in rest, and their horses drave together with a great shock, so that both were thrown down and lay in a swoon. Presently they rose up and fought again till their breath failed, and all the place as they strove was blood red. At the last the other went away to one side and laid him down, and Balin said, 'Who art thou? for never have I found one to match me.' 'My name,' said the other, 'is Balan, and I am brother to the good knight Balin.' Then Balin swooned away again for grief and anguish, and when he awoke once more he said, 'O brother, thou hast slain me, and I thee, and all the world will speak of us both.' 'Alas!' said Balan, 'I knew thee not, for though I saw thy two swords, yet, because thou didst carry a larger shield, I thought that thou wast not the same knight.' As they thus made their moan the lady of the tower came with four knights and six ladies, and six yeomen with them, and these they besought that they might be buried within the same place where they had fought together; and so the brothers died. In the noon came Merlin and wrote on the tomb letters of gold which said, 'Here lieth Balin the Knight of the Two Swords, who smote the dolorous stroke.' And he took Balin's sword, and set on it another pommel in place of its own, and gave it to a knight to handle: but the knight could not stir it. Then said Merlin, 'None but the best knight shall handle this sword; and that shall be Sir Lancelot, or his son Galahad: and with this sword Lancelot shall slay Sir Gawaine, the man that he loved best in the world.' Then also Merlin made a bridge of iron and steel into that island, half-a-foot broad, over which those only should pass who were not guilty of fraud and falsehood;[1] and by his subtilty he

[1] This is manifestly the bridge Al-Sirat of Mohammedan tradition. With it may be compared the Teutonic Bifröst, the waving bridge which joins earth and heaven.

caused Balin's sword to be put in a marble stone standing upright as great as a millstone, and the stone, heaved up above the water, swam down the stream for many years till it reached the city of Camelot. On that same day Galahad brought the scabbard of Balin's sword, and so got the weapon in the marble stone that floated upon the water. And when these things were done, Merlin came to King Arthur and told him of the dolorous stroke which Balin gave to King Pellam, and of all the evils which had followed it; and King Arthur mourned at the tidings, for he said, 'In the world I know not two such knights as these.'

So ends the tale of Balin and Balan, the good knights of Northumberland.

CHAPTER III.

THE WEDDING OF ARTHUR AND GUENEVERE.

Now the king took counsel with Merlin, because his barons would have him take a wife; and Merlin asked, 'Is there any on whom thy love is set?' 'Yes,' said the king, 'I love Guenevere, the daughter of King Leodegrance who has in his house the Round Table which he had from my father Uther.' 'In truth,' answered Merlin, 'the maiden for her beauty is right well-fitted to be a queen: but if ye loved her not so well as ye do, I might find another who should please thee not less, for Guenevere can not be a wholesome wife for thee, and she will bring great sorrow to thee and to thy realm. But when a man's heart is set, it may not easily be turned aside.' 'That is true,' said the king: and straightway he sent messengers to King Leodegrance to ask for his daughter, and Leodegrance rejoiced at the tidings. 'I would yield him rich lands with my child,' he said, 'but Arthur has lands enough. Yet will I send him a gift that shall please him more, for I will give him the Round Table which Uther Pendragon gave me, and to which there were a hundred knights and fifty. Of these fifty have been slain in my days, but the hundred shall go with Guenevere.' So they set out, and by water and land came royally to London, where the king joyously welcomed his bride and the hundred knights, and bade Merlin spy out fifty more knights throughout the land, who might be worthy to sit at that table: but only twenty-eight could Merlin find. Then the Bishop of Canterbury came and blessed the seats for the eight-

and twenty knights, who did homage to the king. And when they were gone, Merlin found in every seat letters of gold that told the names of the knights who had sat therein. But two seats were void.

Then came young Gawaine and besought the king to make him a knight on the day in which he should wed Guenevere; and the king said that so it should be, because he was his sister's son. And after him, riding upon a lean mare, came a poor man who brought with him a fair youth; and he also besought Arthur that the youth might be made a knight. 'Thou askest me a great thing,' said Arthur. 'Who art thou? and does this prayer come of thee or of thy son?' 'I am Aries the cowherd,' answered the man, 'and I desire not this of myself. Nay, to say truth, I have thirteen sons, who will ever do that which I bid them: but this one will spend his time only in folly and delights, only in battles and to see knights.' Then the king bent his eyes on the youth, who was named Tor, and he saw that he was both brave and fair; and he bade that the other sons of the cowherd should be brought. But all these were shapen like the poor man, and none was in any wise like Tor. Then the youth knelt and besought the king to make him a knight of the Round Table. 'A knight I will make you,' said Arthur, 'and hereafter thou shalt be also of the Round Table, if thou art found worthy.' Then turning to Merlin, he said, 'Will Tor be a good knight?' 'Of a truth, he will,' answered Merlin, 'for he is no son of the cowherd. His father is King Pellinore.'

When on the morrow King Pellinore came to the court, the king brought Sir Tor before him and told him that he was his son; and Sir Pellinore embraced him joyfully. Then the king asked Merlin why two places were void in the seats: and Merlin said, 'No man shall sit in those places, but they that are of most worship: and on the Perilous Seat there is but one man on the earth who shall be found worthy to sit. If any who are not worthy dare to sit on it, he shall be destroyed.' Then taking Pellinore by the hand, he put him next the two seats and the Seat Perilous, and said, 'This is your place, for of all that are here you are the most worthy to sit in it.' When Sir Gawaine heard these words, he was moved with envy, that the man who had slain his father, the King of Orkney, should be thus honoured; and he would have slain him straightway, but his brother Gaheris besought him not to trouble the high feast by so doing. 'Let us wait till we have him out of the court:' and Gawaine said, 'I will.'

When now the marriage day was come, the king wedded Guenevere at Camelot in the Church of St Stephen; and afterwards there was great feasting, and Arthur gave charge to Sir Gawaine and Gaheris his brother, to Sir Tor and his father Sir Pellinore, who went forth, and each did great deeds before they came back to the king. With Sir Pellinore came a lady, whom he had rescued, named Nimue; and as they journeyed to Camelot, and were resting under the shadow of thick trees, two knights met, as they rode by, and one asked the other what tidings there might be from Camelot; and the other told him of the fellowship of Arthur's table, and said, 'We cannot break it up; and well nigh all the world holdeth with Arthur, for there is the flower of chivalry. Wherefore with these tidings I ride to the north.' 'Nay,' said the other, 'there is no need. I have a remedy with me; for I bear a poison to a friend who is right nigh to Arthur, and with it he will poison the king.' So they went each on his way, and Sir Pellinore told all that he had seen and heard when he came to the king at Camelot, with the lady whom he had rescued.

But when Merlin set eyes on the damsel, he was besotted with her, and would let her have no rest, but always she must be with him. And she spake him fair till she had learned of him all manner of things that she sought to know. Yet the old man knew what should befall him, and he told the king that yet a little while, and he should go down into the earth alive, and he warned Arthur to keep well the sword and the scabbard, for these would be stolen by a woman whom he most trusted. 'Nay,' said the king, 'but if thou knowest what shall befall thee, why dost thou not prevent that mishap by thy craft?' 'It may not be,' said Merlin; and presently the damsel went away, and Merlin followed whithersoever she went; but she had made him swear to do no inchantment upon her, if he would have her love. So he went with her over the sea to the land of Benwick, where Merlin spake with Elaine, King Ban's wife, and there he saw young Lancelot; and Elaine mourned greatly for the fierce war which Claudas made against Ban. 'Heed it not,' said Merlin, 'for before twenty years are gone, this child shall revenge you on King Claudas, and he shall be the man of most worship in the world.' 'Shall I indeed,' asked Elaine, 'live to see my son a man of so great a prowess?' 'Yea, indeed thou shalt see it,' answered Merlin, 'and live many years after.' Soon after this, the maiden departed, and Merlin went with her till they came into Cornwall; but the damsel was weary of him, and afraid because he was a

devil's son, and so it came to pass that when Merlin showed her a marvellous rock, beneath which there were great inchantments, she besought him to go under the stone and show her the marvels that were there; but when he was beneath it, she so wrought that he never came forth again; and she left him and went her way.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TREASON OF MORGAN LE FAY.

About this time, as Arthur rode to Camelot, the tidings came that the King of Denmark, with five other kings, was ravaging the land of the north. 'Alas!' said Arthur, 'when have I had one month's rest since I became king of the land?' Nevertheless, he would not tarry an hour, although his lords were wroth because he set out thus hastily. So he hastened away with Guenevere the queen (for he said that he should be the hardier if she were with him), and came into a forest beside Humber; and a knight, when he heard that Arthur was come, warned the five kings to make haste and do battle with him, for the longer they tarried they would be ever the weaker, and Arthur stronger. And the five kings hearkened to his words, and fell on Arthur in the night; but though they killed many, and there was for some while a great tumult, yet Arthur and his knights, Sir Kay, Sir Gawaine, and Sir Griflet, slew the five kings. In the morning, when their people knew that they were dead, they were struck with such fear that they fell from their horses, and Arthur and his men came upon them, and slew them to the number of thirty thousand, so that well nigh no man escaped alive; but on Arthur's side were slain only two hundred, with eight knights of the Round Table. And Arthur raised a fair church and minster on the battle-field, and called it the Abbey of Good Adventure.

Then the king took counsel with Sir Pellinore about the knights who should be chosen for the Round Table in place of those who had been slain; and Pellinore gave counsel to choose Uriens, the husband of Morgan le Fay, the king's sister, and Galagars, and Hervise, and the King of the Lake, and with these four younger knights, of whom there were Gawaine, Griflet, and Kay; and for the fourth he bade Arthur choose between Tor and Bagdemagus. And Arthur chose Tor, because he said little and did much; and

Bagdemagus went away sore displeased, and swore never to come back till he should be worthy to be chosen for the Round Table. As he rode with his squire he found a branch of an holy herb which was the sign of the Sangreal, and no man of evil life could ever find it. Then he came to the rock beneath which lay Merlin, making great dole; but when he would have helped him, Merlin bade him not to spend his strength for naught, for only she could help him who had put him there. So Bagdemagus went his way, and after doing many great deeds he came back and was chosen a knight of the Round Table.

Now Arthur, with many of his knights, went hunting and chased a hart till they left their people far behind them, and at last their horses fell dead. 'Let us go on on foot,' said Uriens; and at last they came up with the hart, and they saw also a great water, and on it a ship which came straight towards them, and landed on the sands. But when they looked into it they found no earthly creature therein, and they wondered for the beauty of the ship, which was hung all over with cloth of silk. And now it was dark night, when suddenly there burst forth a great light, and twelve damsels came forth, and welcomed Arthur by his name, and led him with Uriens and Accolon of Gaul, who were with him, to a table laden with wine and costly things, and then brought them each into a fair chamber that they might rest. But in the morning Uriens found himself in Camelot with Morgan le Fay, his wife, and King Arthur found himself in a dark prison, in which he heard the moaning of many who were shut up with him. Then the king asked them how they came there, and they told him that they had all been entrapped on their way by an evil knight, named Damas, who kept back part of his heritage from his brother Sir Ontzlake, whom men loved as much as they hated Damas; but because Ontzlake was the better knight, Damas was afraid to fight with him, and sought to get a champion, but none would take spear in hand for so evil a man; and so it came to pass that they abode in the weary prison till eighteen had died. Presently there came a damsel who asked Arthur if he would fight for Damas. 'Yea, I will do so,' he said, 'for it is better to fight with a knight than to die in a dungeon—but only if all here be set free.' Then the maiden said that so it should be, and that a horse and armour should be brought for the king. And the king said to the maiden, 'Surely I have seen thee in the court of Arthur;' and she said, 'Nay; for I am the daughter of the lord of this castle.' But she spake falsely, for she was one of the damsels of Morgan le Fay. So was it sworn between them that

Damas should set all the knights free, and that Arthur should do battle for him to the death.

Thus had it fared with Arthur. But when Accolon awoke, he found himself by a dark well-side, and from that fountain through a silver pipe the water ran in a marble basin; and Accolon said, 'God help King Arthur, for these women have betrayed us.' And even as he spake there came a dwarf who brought him greetings from Morgan le Fay, and bade him be of good heart. 'In the morning,' he said, 'thou shalt fight with a knight at the hour of prime, and here is Excalibur, Arthur's sword, and the scabbard. Wherefore rise up and do battle without mercy, as ye love her.' So he sware to do as he was bidden for the love of Morgan le Fay; and presently a knight and a lady, with six squires, led him to the house of Sir Ontzlake: and a messenger came from Damas to say that he had found a knight to fight for him, and to challenge Ontzlake to the battle. But Ontzlake was sorely wounded, and besought Accolon to take his cause in hand, and thus it came to pass that Accolon fought with the king's sword against the king whom he loved, for he knew not who he was who fought for Sir Damas. Long and terrible was the fight, for the false sword which Morgan le Fay had given to Arthur hit not like Excalibur, and the blood streamed from the king's body because the scabbard which he wore was not the scabbard of Excalibur, and thus as the strife went on Arthur grew weaker, while Accolon waxed stronger. But Arthur would not yield, not even when his sword broke at the cross and fell into the grass while the pommel remained in his hands. Then Accolon stood over the king and bade him yield himself, for he was greatly loth to slay him; but Arthur said, 'I have sworn to fight to the death, and I lose not good name because I lose my weapon.' So when Accolon came against him once more, Arthur struck him with the pommel a blow so heavy that he reeled three strides backward. But the Lady of the Lake was looking on, and it was a grief to her that such a knight as Arthur should be slain. So at the next stroke she caused Excalibur to fly from the hand of Accolon, and Arthur leaping forth seized it in his hand, and said, 'Too long hast thou been from me, and much harm hast thou wrought me.' Then looking at Accolon he spied the scabbard of his own sword, and with a quick rush he seized it and threw it far away from them both. 'Now,' said Arthur to Accolon, 'thou shalt die;' and he dealt him a blow that the blood rushed from him in a torrent. 'Slay me if thou wilt,' said Accolon, 'but I have sworn not to yield me in this fight. Yet thou art the best knight that

ever I have seen, and well I know that God is with you.' 'Tell me, then, who thou art,' said Arthur; and he answered, 'I am Accolon of Gaul, of King Arthur's court.' 'Nay, but I am Arthur,' said the king in great fear because of the inchantments of Morgan le Fay; 'tell me now, how earnest thou by the sword and the scabbard?' Then Accolon told him how the dwarf had brought them from Morgan le Fay, but that he knew not against whom he was using them in this fight; and he besought the king's pardon. Then said Arthur, 'Thee I can forgive; but upon my sister I will take such vengeance that all Christendom shall ring with it, for I have worshipped her more than all my kin, and trusted her more than mine own wife.' Then Arthur told the keepers of the field that there would have been no battle between them if each had known who the other was; and Accolon said, 'This knight with whom I have fought, to my great sorrow, is the man of most manhood and worship in the world, for he is our liege lord, King Arthur.' Then the people, falling on their knees, prayed for mercy. 'Mercy ye shall have,' said Arthur; 'and this is my judgment betwixt the two brethren. For thee, Sir Damas, I learn that thou art but a worthless knight, and full of villainy; thou shalt give to thy brother the whole manor to hold of thee; also thou shalt swear no more to harm knights who may be journeying on their way, and thou shalt give back to those knights who have been set free from thy dungeon all the harness of which thou hast robbed them; and if any come to me to say thou hast not done this, thou shalt die. Thee, Sir Ontzlake, I bid to my court, for thou art a brave knight, and an upright man.' Moreover, Arthur told Ontzlake how the battle between himself and Accolon had been brought about, and Ontzlake marvelled that any man or woman could be found to work treason against Arthur; and the king said, 'I shall soon reward them by the grace of God.' But the king needed rest after the fight, and they brought him to a fair abbey where in four days Sir Accolon died, for he had lost so much blood that he could not live. Then said Arthur, 'Bear this body to my sister, Morgan le Fay, and say that I sent it to her as a gift, and that I have my sword and its scabbard.' So they bare the body of Accolon to Camelot.

But meantime Morgan le Fay made sure that Arthur had died, and she bade one of her maidens fetch her husband's sword, for now would she slay him. In vain the damsel besought her not to do so; and she went to Sir Uwaine and said, 'Rise up, for thy

mother is about to slay thy father, and I go to fetch the sword.' Presently as Morgan le Fay stood by the bedside with the sword in her hands, Sir Uwaine seized her and said, 'Ah, fiend, what wilt thou do? Men say that a devil was Merlin's father, and I may say that a devil is my mother.' Then Morgan cried for mercy and besought him not to discover her; and Uwaine made her swear that she would not do the like in time to come.

At last the tidings came that it was Accolon who had died, and that Arthur had again his sword and his scabbard, and the heart of Morgan almost burst with her grief. But because she would not have it known, she suffered not her face to bewray her sorrow; and because she knew that if she tarried till Arthur came back no ransom should save her life, she besought Queen Guenevere for leave to ride into the country; and on the morrow she hastened to the abbey where Arthur lay sleeping, and lighting off her horse went straight into the chamber, where she found Arthur asleep and Excalibur naked in his right hand. So, grieving terribly that she might not take the sword without awaking him, she took the scabbard and went her way. When Arthur awoke and saw that his scabbard was gone, he charged his knights with having watched him falsely; but they said, 'We durst not withstand your sister's bidding.' Then Arthur bid Sir Ontzlake arm and ride with him in all haste, and they hastened after Morgan, until they saw her speeding from them as fast as her horse could bear her. When at last she knew that there was no hope of escape, she swore that her brother should never have the scabbard, and taking it from her girdle she hurled it into a lake hard by, and it sunk forthwith, for it was heavy with gold and precious stones. Then riding on she came to a valley where there were many large stones, and because she saw that Arthur would soon overtake her, she turned herself and those who were with her into stones, so that when they came up, the king could not discern between his sister and her men. So he rode back to the abbey whence he had come; and when he was gone, Morgan turned herself and her men into their former likeness, and as she went on, she rescued from a knight who was going to drown him, a cousin of Accolon named Manassen, and she bade him go tell Arthur that she had rescued him not for the love of the king but for love of Accolon, and that she feared nothing so long as she could change herself and those who were with her into stones, for she could do greater things than these when the time should come.

Not long had Manassen reached Camelot when there came a

damsel, bearing the richest mantle that ever was seen, set full of precious stones, and she said, 'Your sister sends this mantle that you may take this gift from her, and if in aught she has done you wrong, she will amend it.' But the Lady of the Lake warned him in secret, 'Take heed that the garment come not nigh thee or any of thy knights, until thou hast made the bringer of it put it on.' Then said the king to the maiden, 'I would see upon you this raiment which ye have brought,' and when the damsel said that it was not seemly for her to wear a king's garment, Arthur made them put it on her, and she was burnt to coals. But the king turned to Sir Uriens and said, 'I know not what these treasons may mean. Thee I can scarcely suspect, for Accolon confessed to me that Morgan would destroy thee as well as me; for Uwaine I hold suspected, and I bid thee send him from my court.' Then said Gawaine, 'He who banishes my cousin banishes me;' so the two departed, and Gaheris said, 'We have lost two good knights for the love of one.'

As they went upon their way Uwaine and Gawaine came to a tower in a valley, where twelve maidens with two knights went to and fro near a tree on which hung a white shield, and they spit at the shield and threw mire on it as they passed: and they asked the maidens why they did so, they said, 'It is the shield of Sir Marhaus who hates all ladies.' 'It may be that he has cause, said Gawaine; and presently came Marhaus himself, and the two knights of the tower hastened to do battle with him, but they were both slain; and after this Marhaus jousted with Gawaine and Uwaine. The fight was long and fierce, for so it was that from nine of the clock till noontide Gawaine waxed stronger and stronger; but when it was past noon and drew toward evensong, Sir Gawaine's strength waned, and Sir Marhaus grew bigger and bigger, and at last Marhaus said, 'It were a pity to do you hurt, for you are passing feeble.' So they took off their helmets and kissed each other, and swore to love henceforth as brethren: and they went together to the home of Sir Marhaus, with whom Gawaine and Uwaine tarried seven days till their wounds were well healed. Then Marhaus guided them to the forest of Alroy, in which by a fair stream of water they saw three damsels sitting. The eldest had a garland of gold upon her head, and her hair was white under her garland, for she had seen threescore winters or more. The second had on her head a circlet of gold, and she was thirty winters old. The third, whose head was crowned with flowers, had seen only fifteen summers. 'Wherefore sit ye by the fountain?' asked the knight, and the maidens answered, 'We

sit here watching for errant knights, that we may teach them strange adventures: and if ye be men who seek adventures, each one of you must choose one of us, and we will lead you to three highways, and then each of you shall choose his way and his damsel shall go with him; and when twelve months have passed, ye must meet here again; and to this ye must plight your troth.' 'It is well said,' they answered; and Sir Uwaine said, 'I am the youngest and the weakest, therefore will I have the eldest damsel, for she has seen much and can help me best when I have need.' Then said Sir Marhaus, 'I will have the second damsel, for she falls best to me.' 'I thank you,' said Sir Gawaine, 'for ye have left me the youngest and fairest, and she only it is whom I would have.' When they came to the parting of the roads, they kissed and went each his way—Sir Uwaine to the west, Sir Marhaus to the south, and Sir Gawaine to the north.

Now, when he had gone some way, Gawaine came to a lawn, and near a cross which stood there, there came by the fairest knight that they had ever seen: but he was mourning as one in great grief. Then there followed ten knights who threw their spears at the sorrowful knight, but he unhorsed them all, and afterwards suffered them to bind him and to treat him shamefully. 'Why go you not to his help?' said the damsel to Gawaine. 'I would do so,' he answered, 'but it seems he will have no help.' But now three knights came and challenged Gawaine to joust with them: and while they were jousting, another knight came to the damsel and asked why she abode with him who had brought her thither. 'I find it not in my heart,' she said, 'to abide with him any longer, for he helps not those who need his aid;' and she departed with the stranger. When the jousting was ended, Gawaine asked who the sorrowful knight might be; and they told him that his name was Sir Pelleas, and that he loved the lady Ettard, who would not listen to his suit, and even drove him from her with evil words, although in a great jousting he had won the right to crown the fairest lady, and had placed the circlet upon her brow. But so was Pelleas smitten by love for Ettard, that he suffered her knights to bind him after he had conquered them in fighting, in hopes that he might thus be brought into her sight; but he hoped in vain. Then said Gawaine, 'I will go and help him, and he shall see the lady of his love.' So on the next day he made an oath with Pelleas that he would win the damsel for him, and when he came to the house of Ettard, he told her that he was a knight who had slain Sir Pelleas. At this Ettard was so full of joy that she welcomed Gawaine and made him good

cheer, until he forgot the word he had plighted to Pelleas, and wooed the maiden for himself. When Pelleas knew that Gawaine was forsworn, he took horse, for he could tarry no longer for pure sorrow; and he went his way and laid him down upon his bed to die. But the Lady of the Lake whom Merlin had loved came and looked on him as he slept, and she said, 'So fair a knight shall not die;' and in two hours she came back with the lady Ettard, and threw such an inchantment upon her that Ettard loved Pelleas now as much as she had hated him in time past. But when Pelleas woke and saw her standing near, he hated her with all his soul. 'Begone, traitress,' he said, 'and never come near me more.' So Ettard went away and died of sorrow, and the Lady of the Lake led Pelleas into her own land, and they loved together while they lived.

But Marhaus with the maiden of thirty winters' age did better things, for he came first to the house of a duke who received him churlishly, and when he knew who he was, said that on the morrow he must fight with himself and his six sons, because Gawaine had slain his seven sons and now was the time for vengeance, and Marhaus must fight alone with seven against him. So on the morrow they fought, and Marhaus was so mighty that he overthrew them all, and made them swear never more to be foes to King Arthur or his knights. Then Marhaus went on with his damsel, and at a great tourney he won a rich circlet of gold worth a thousand besants, and afterwards slew a terrible giant who ravaged the lands of Earl Fergus, and delivered many ladies and knights out of the giant's dungeon. There he got great riches, so that he was never poor all the days of his life, and so went on his way with the maiden to the trysting-place.

Likewise with the damsel of sixty winters' age, Sir Uwaine bore himself as a good knight, for he avenged the Lady of the Rock against those who had robbed her of her heritage, and restored to her all her lands; and Sir Uwaine dwelt with the lady for nearly half a year, to be healed of the grievous wounds which he had received when he did battle on her behalf. Then as the year came round, he hastened with the maiden to the trysting-place: and all met there, as they had agreed; but the damsel that Gawaine had could say little good of him.

So at last they came back to the king, who was right glad to see them, and bade them tell him all that had befallen them. When the feast of Pentecost came, the Lady of the Lake brought with her Sir Pelleas, who was made a knight of the Round Table,

and Sir Marhaus also, for there were two seats void, for two knights were slain that year: and Sir Pelleas was afterwards one of the four that achieved the Sangreal.

CHAPTER V.

THE CROWNING OF ARTHUR AT ROME.

Now it was that, as Arthur held a royal feast with the knights of the Round Table, and the kings and princes who were his friends and allies, there came twelve ancient men and charged him to pay truage for his realm to the emperor who was at Rome. Then some of the knights and lords were so wroth that they would have slain the messengers, but Arthur stayed their hands. 'I like not their message,' he said, 'but I must remember mine honour.'

Then Arthur took counsel, and when the King of Scotland, the Lord of West Wales, and the King of Little Britain, with many others, had sworn to help him, he sent for the Roman messengers, and said, 'Go tell your lord it is I who am emperor, not he, and I am coming to Rome with my army to make good my right and subdue those that rebel against me.' Then with large gifts and great courtesy he sent them away: and when they reached Rome, there was sore fear among the great men who were with the emperor, and one said to him, 'It may be thou hast made a rod for thyself, for Arthur is all another man than ye think for, and around him is the noblest fellowship of knights, lords, and princes that is in the world. For his courage the world is too little, and in his person he is the most manly man that lives.' Then the emperor told how he meant to pass the mountains and do battle with Arthur; and he summoned together all the kings and chiefs who were bound to do him service from Europe and from Africa, from Ind and Egypt, Galatia and Turkey, and with them fifty giants who were born of fiends to guard his person. So came the emperor to Cologne.

And Arthur held a Parliament at York, and there left his queen and realm to the governance of Sir Baldwin and Sir Constantine, and then sailed away with his host from Sandwich. After they had landed at Barflete in Flanders, there came a poor man who told the king of a great giant who slew men and

devoured children in Brittany, and how he had stolen away the duchess, the wife of Howell, the king's cousin. Then with Sir Kay and Sir Bedivere he rode on pilgrimage to St Michael's Mount, but when he reached its foot, he bade them stay while he went up alone. Fearful was the fight when he found the giant gnawing the limbs of a man and challenged him to battle, for when the king had smitten him, the giant threw away his club and catching him in his arms crushed his ribs; and so they struggled and wrung together, till they rolled down the hill and reached the sea mark at the place where the king had charged Sir Kay and Sir Bedivere to await him. And now he bade Sir Kay to smite off the giant's head and bear it to Sir Howell; and the people came and thanked the king for his great exploit. 'Give the thanks to God,' he said, 'and part the goods among you.'

Then were there fearful battles between Arthur's men and the hosts of the emperor; but everywhere Arthur's men were the conquerors, and when he saw what great things his knights had done, he embraced them knight by knight in his arms and said, 'Never was there king that had knights so noble as mine.' At the last there came a day in which Arthur fought with the emperor and smote him with Excalibur that he died; and he sent the body with the bodies of many lords who had been slain, charging the men who bare them to tell the Romans that the king sent them as the tribute for which they had asked, and that if this did not suffice he would pay them more when he came himself to Rome. Thither he went by Milan and Pavia, and through Tuscany, and in the cities to which he came all the people yielded him homage and sware to be his subjects for ever; and at Rome at Christmastide he was crowned emperor by the Pope, and then he held high festival with his knights, and gave lands and realms unto his servants, in such wise that none complained whether rich or poor. So was his journey ended with honour and worship. Then said the king, 'To tempt God is no wisdom; therefore wend we again to England;' and to England they came, and Queen Guenevere hastened to meet her lord at Sandwich; and at every city and burgh the commons brought him splendid gifts to welcome home their king.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EXPLOITS OF SIR LANCELOT DU LAKE.

AMONG the knights who had fought for Arthur with the Romans none had done so great deeds as Lancelot du Lake; and for this Queen Guenevere had him in favour above all other knights, and of a truth he loved the queen above all other ladies and damsels all his life, and for her did many deeds of arms. When he was now well rested, he set out with his nephew Sir Lionel, and they rode into a deep forest and so into a deep plain; and as the sun waxed hot, the eyes of Lancelot became heavy with sleep, and Lionel said, 'See here is a great apple-tree; there rest we ourselves and our horses.' So there they alighted, and tied their horses to trees, and Lancelot sank to sleep heavily while Lionel kept watch. But as he watched, there came three knights riding, and yet another followed who smote down the three who had gone before; and Lionel thought to rescue them, and privily mounted his horse, because he sought not to awake Lancelot. But he fared no better than the three knights, for he too was taken, and carried by the knight to his castle, where he with them was beaten with thorns, and thrust into a dungeon. In like manner fared Sir Ector de Maris, who had followed Lancelot to aid him. He too was seized by Sir Turquine, and when he found Sir Lionel in the dungeon, he asked him where Sir Lancelot might be. 'I left him asleep,' he said, 'under an apple-tree, when I went from him; but what is become of him I cannot tell.' 'Alas!' said the knights who were captives in the dungeon, 'if Lancelot rescue us not, there is none other that can deliver us out of the hands of Turquine.'

Now, as Lancelot lay sleeping under the tree, there came by four queens, and as they looked on his face, they knew that it was Sir Lancelot, and they began to strive for him, for each said she would have him to be her love. 'Nay,' said Morgan le Fay, 'I will put an inchantment upon him, and when he wakes up from it, let him choose which of us four he will have.' So they bare him sleeping to the castle Chariot; and on the morn the four queens stood before him, and said, 'We know thee well that thou art Sir Lancelot, King Ban's son; and well we know that Queen Guenevere has thy love; but as now thou must lose her for ever, therefore thou must now choose one of us four. I am Morgan le Fay, and here is the Queen of North Wales, the Queen of East-

land, and the Queen of the Out Isles. Choose which thou wilt have; and if thou wilt not choose, in this prison thou shalt die.' Then said Lancelot, 'I will have none of you, for ye are all false inchantresses: and for Guenevere, I would prove, were I free, that she is the truest lady living.' Then the Queens left him in great wrath; but a fair maiden rescued him from their wiles, and she was the daughter of King Bagdemagus. She it was who brought him to his armour and his horse, and bade him ride to an abbey of white monks, whither she would bring her father to him. And even so it came about; and Lancelot promised to aid Bagdemagus in a great tourney which was soon to be held. In that tourney Lancelot did great things, for he smote down the King of North Wales and Sir Mador of the Gate, and after him, Sir Mordred and Sir Gahalatine; and so was it judged that Bagdemagus should have the prize.

Then said Lancelot that he must go seek his brother Lionel; and as he journeyed, it so chanced that he came into the same forest where he was taken sleeping; and a damsel came, which asked him if he would do battle with Sir Turquine, who had in his dungeon threescore and four knights of Arthur's court. Then Lancelot sware to do as she desired; and presently he saw riding towards him a great knight, before whom an armed knight lay bound across his horse; and Lancelot knew him to be Gaheris, the brother of Sir Gawaine. Then Lancelot challenged Sir Turquine to the battle; and they fought fiercely, until at length Turquine promised to free all his prisoners if Lancelot would tell him his name, because he was the bravest knight whom he had ever met, and like one knight that he hated above all other knights. 'It is well said,' answered Lancelot; 'and now tell thou me, who is this knight whom thou hatest above all other men?' 'To say sooth,' said Turquine, 'he is Lancelot du Lake, who slew my brother Carados; and if ever we meet, one of us shall remain dead upon the ground. For his sake I have slain a hundred good knights, and have scores in prison, and all these will I set free, so thou be not Lancelot.' 'Well, said Sir Lancelot, 'if, thou wilt know it, I am Lancelot du Lake, the son of King Ban of Benwick, and very knight of the Round Table.' 'Ah!' said Turquine, 'thou art most welcome to me of all men, for we part not till one of us be dead.' But for all his large words, Turquine was smitten to death by Lancelot, who rescued Gaheris, and bade him go to Turquine's castle and give his greeting to Arthur's knights who lay in the dungeon, charging them to take such stuff as they might find, and then to go to the court

and await his coming about the time of Pentecost. But this they would not do, for they said that it would be shame to them if they hastened not to his help.

And once again Lancelot did good service to the daughter of Bagdemagus by rescuing her from the hands of Sir Peris of the Forest; and after that he asked if she needed aught more at his hands. 'Nay,' she said, 'at this time. But God guard thee for the greatest knight that now lives. But one thing thou lackest —that ye will not love some maiden; and it is noised that ye love Queen Guenevere, and that she has ordained by inchantment that ye shall never love any but her; wherefore many are sad in this land, both great and small.' 'Fair maiden,' said Lancelot, 'I may not keep people from saying what it pleaseth them to say; but I think not to be a wedded man, and I would go on my way with my hands clean and my heart pure.' So they parted; and Lancelot went on to do great things. At the Castle of Tintagil, where Uther won Igerne, he slew two giants, and set free threescore ladies who had been their prisoners for seven years. And after this he rescued Sir Kay from three knights who had set upon him, and he made them yield themselves to Sir Kay, and swear to go and tell Queen Guenevere that Sir Kay sent them to be her prisoners.

In the night, as Sir Kay and he slept together, Lancelot rose quietly and put on Sir Kay's armour and shield, and so went on his way; and soon he had to fight with other two knights, who took him to be Sir Kay. These also he overcame, and he charged them to yield themselves to Queen Guenevere at Whitsuntide, and to say that Sir Kay had sent them unto her. After this, a maiden, whose brother was sore wounded, besought him to go into the Chapel Perilous, and thence bring a sword and a cloth, which should stanch his bleeding, for in no other wise could it be stanched. So Lancelot went into the chapel, and within he saw a dim lamp burning, and before the altar a corpse covered with a cloth of silk. As he stooped down to cut off a piece of this cloth, the earth quaked, so that Lancelot was afraid; but he seized the fair sword which lay by the body, and hastened out of the chapel. As he passed out, a fair damsel bade him leave the sword, if he would not die. 'It may not be,' said Lancelot. 'Thou hast done well,' answered the maiden, 'for if thou hadst left the sword, thou shouldest never see Queen Guenevere. And now, I pray thee, kiss me but once.' 'God forbid,' said Sir Lancelot. 'Well,' said the damsel, 'hadst thou kissed me, thy days had been done; but now have I lost all my labour, for I

ordained this chapel for thy sake and for Sir Gawaine: and once I had Sir Gawaine within my power, when he fought with Sir Gilbert, the dead knight, whose sword thou hast taken. But know now, Sir Lancelot, that I have loved thee these seven years past; yet may no woman have thy love but Guenevere. Still, if I could not have thee alive, I should have no greater joy in this world than to have thy body dead. Then would I have embalmed and kept it all my days; and daily should I have kissed thee in spite of Guenevere.' 'God preserve me from your subtle crafts,' said Lancelot. And so he went his way; and the maiden pined away in her sorrow till, on the fourteenth night, she died; and her name was Hellawes, the sorceress, the lady of the castle Nigramous. Presently there met him the damsel who had prayed him to stanch the bleeding of her brother, Sir Meliot, and when she saw him, she clapped her hands for joy. Then they went together to the castle where the bleeding knight lay; and when Lancelot touched his wounds with Sir Gilbert's sword, and wiped them with the cloth that he took from Gilbert's body, Sir Meliot rose up hale and strong as ever he had been in his life, and Lancelot charged him to show himself at Arthur's court on the feast of Pentecost. But Lancelot himself yet went on his way, doing brave and knightly deeds; and sometimes they for whom he wrought them were worthy, but sometimes they were treacherous, and sought to trap him by his goodness and his courtesy.

At the last he journeyed back to Arthur's court, and there were all those whom he had charged to go and yield themselves at the feet of Guenevere, and there also were Gawaine and Gaheris, and all praised Lancelot for his great exploits. 'Yea,' said Sir Kay, 'Lancelot took my harness and left me his; and so I rode in peace, and none had aught to say to me, because they took me for Sir Lancelot.' And Sir Meliot also told his tale. Then was there great joy and gladness: and at that feast Sir Belleus was made a knight of the Round Table.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORY OF SIR GARETH OF ORKNEY.

KING ARTHUR was holding high festival in the Castle of Kinkenadon upon the sands that marched nigh Wales, when there came into the hall two men on whose shoulders there leaned the fairest

and goodliest youth that ever man saw, as though of himself he could not walk. When they reached the dais, the youth prayed God to bless the king and all his fair fellowship of the Round Table. 'And now I pray thee, grant me three gifts, which I seek not against reason: the one of these I will ask thee now, and the other two when twelve months have come round.' 'Ask,' said Arthur, 'and ye shall have your asking.' 'Then,' answered the youth, 'I will that ye give me meat and drink for a year.' And though the king bade him ask something better, yet would he not: and Arthur said, 'Meat and drink enough shalt thou have; for that I never stinted to friend or foe. But what is thy name?' 'That I cannot tell,' said the youth. 'Strange,' said the king, 'that thou shouldest not know thy name, and thou the goodliest youth that ever mine eyes have seen.' Then the king gave him in charge to Sir Kay, who scorned him because he had asked so mean a gift. 'Since he has no name,' said Sir Kay, 'I will call him Pretty-hands, and into the kitchen shall he go, and there have fat brose, so that at the year's end he shall be fat as a pork hog.' So the youth went to the hall door and sat down among boys and lads, and there he ate sadly. Yea though Sir Gawaine and Sir Lancelot would have him come and drink wine in their chamber, yet would he not stir from the place where Sir Kay had put him. So was it throughout the twelve months, that he displeased not man nor child by reason of his meekness and his mildness. Only when there was any jousting of knights, he hastened to see it; and when there were any sports, none might cast bar nor stone, as he did, by two yards.

At Whitsuntide the king again made high festival; and a maiden came beseeching him to succour a lady who was besieged in her castle by the Red Knight of the Red Lawns. But she would not tell the lady's name: and because she would not, the king said that none of his knights that were there should go to help her with his will. Then came the youth and spake to the king. 'I have had one gift: and now I ask the other two, as thou didst promise. First, let me have this adventure; and next, bid Sir Lancelot make me knight, for of him alone will I take knighthood.' 'All this shall be done,' said the king. 'Fie,' said the maiden, 'am I to have only your kitchen-knave?' and she took her horse and went away wroth.

At that moment came one who said to the youth that a dwarf was come with his armour and horse, and with all manner of rich things. So the youth mounted his horse, and rode after the damsel. Then said Sir Kay, 'I will go and see how the kitchen-

boy fares ;' but when the youth saw him coming, he turned and bade Sir Kay beware. But Sir Kay put his spear in rest; and when the youth saw this, he rushed towards him, and thrusting aside the spear with his sword, smote down Sir Kay, and took his shield and his spear, and rode away. But soon Sir Lancelot overtook him, and they jousted together so fiercely, till at the last Lancelot said, 'Fight not so sore: our quarrel is not so great but we may fairly leave off.' 'That is true,' answered the youth, 'but it does me good to feel your might, nor was it I who challenged the fight; and now I pray you give me the order of knighthood.' But Lancelot said that he could do so only if the youth told him his name. 'Well, then, if you swear not to discover me, I will tell thee. My name is Gareth, and I am brother to Sir Gawaine.' Then was Lancelot right glad and forthwith made him a knight; and the youth rode away. But when he overtook the damsel, she reviled him, and told him that his clothes were full of the grease and tallow of the king's kitchen, and that he was but a mover of spits and a ladle-washer. 'Say to me what thou wilt,' answered the youth, 'I go not from thee till I have done that which I sware to do.' And they had not gone far before a man, who was fleeing away with all his might, prayed him to give him aid against six thieves, who were in the wood, and the youth slew them all. But none the less the damsel reviled him, and said that he had overpowered them not by bravery but by chance, nor would she sit at the same board with him in the house of the man whom he had rescued from the thieves.

On the morrow the youth set forth again with the damsel and came to a ford where on the other side stood two knights to bar the passage. 'Wilt thou match yonder knights?' asked the maiden. 'Yea,' answered the youth, 'though they were not two but eight;' and so it came to pass that in the fight which followed one was drowned and the other cloven to the chin. But the maiden said that he had won all by chance, for the horse of the first knight stumbled, and the second knight fell by mishap. 'Say what thou wilt,' answered the youth, 'I heed it not, so I may win your lady.' Onwards thus they went, the damsel reviling, till they came to a black lawn on which a black banner hung upon a black hawthorn, and on the other side a black shield; and near it stood a black spear and a black horse covered with silk, and a black stone hard by, and by it sat, all armed, the Knight of the Black Lawn, who asked the damsel if she had brought a knight of King Arthur to be her champion. 'Nay,

she said, 'this is but a kitchen knave, of whom I cannot be rid; and I have seen him this day slay two men by mischance, and not by prowess.' Then said the black knight, 'I will but put him down on one foot, and take his horse and his harness, for it were shame to do him any more harm.' But the youth spake in few words and said, 'Sir Knight, thou art full liberal of my horse and harness; but neither shalt thou have of me, unless thou winnest them with thy hands. Let us see then what thou canst do.' 'Is it even so?' said the black knight: 'leave then thy lady, for it is not seemly that a kitchen page should ride by her side.' 'Thou liest,' said the youth, 'I am of higher lineage than thou art, and I will prove it on thy body.' Then they came together and fought fiercely till the youth was sorely hurt, but at the last the black knight fell down in a swoon and died; and the youth put on his armour and took his horse, and rode after the damsel. But still she urged him to flee away, for all that he had done had been done by chance: and still the youth sware that he would not leave her till he should see the uttermost of that journey.

Next, there came towards them a knight clad in green, who asked the maiden if she had brought with her his brother, the black knight. 'Nay,' she said, 'this kitchen-page has slain thy brother; but it was by mischance.' 'Ah! traitor,' said the green knight, 'thou shalt die for thus shamefully slaying my brother.' I defy thee,' answered the youth; 'and I tell thee that I slew him knightly.' So, as he had fought before with the black knight, he fought now with the green knight, until he had unhorsed him, and the green knight besought his mercy. 'No mercy will I give thee,' said the youth, 'unless the maiden who came with me pray me to save thy life.' But she would not, for she thought scorn to ask a boon of a kitchen-page; and the green knight prayed again, and sware to bring thirty knights to do the youth service. 'It will avail thee nought,' said the youth, 'if this maiden ask not for thy life;' and he made as though he were about to slay him. Then said the damsel, surlily, 'Slay him not, for if thou dost thou shalt repent it.' With this was the youth satisfied, and he released the green knight, who kneeled to him and did him homage; and all three rode to the green knight's house, where they lodged that night.

On the morn they arose, and after mass the green knight led them through the forest, and he sware that he and his thirty knights should be ever ready at the youth's bidding. 'See then,' said the youth, 'that ye go and yield yourselves to King Arthur

when I call upon you.' But the maiden was churlish and sullen still, and she warned the youth that he would never be able to go through the perilous pass. 'Well then,' he answered, 'let him who fears flee.' Presently they saw a tower white as snow, and under the tower was a fair meadow; and when the lord of the castle saw them coming, he thought that it was his brother, the black knight. So he cried aloud, 'Brother, what do ye in these marches?' 'Nay,' said the maiden, 'it is not he. He has slain thy brother; but he did it by chance, for he is but a kitchen-knave; he has also overcome thy brother the green knight. But now thou mayest be revenged on him, for I can never be quit of him.' Then was there again a fierce strife, in which the red knight sorely wounded the youth, so that the blood came from him in streams; but at the last he, too, was struck down to the earth, and prayed for mercy. 'No mercy shalt thou have, if this damsel ask not thy life.' But when he made as though he would slay him, the maiden charged him not to do it, for he was a noble knight. And the youth bade the red knight stand up and thank the damsel for his life. Then the red knight took them into his castle, and when the night was come he ordered sixty knights to keep watch round the youth, and guard him against treason, and with these knights he sware to serve him always. And again the youth charged them to be ready to go and yield themselves to King Arthur when he should bid them.

But as they rode on, still the damsel reviled him; and she warned him that they would soon come to the lands of a knight who should pay him all his wages, for he was the man of most worship in the world except King Arthur. 'It is well,' answered the youth, 'for the more he is of worship, the more shall be my worship if I conquer him.' Soon they saw before them a beautiful city, and before the city a fair plain full of pavilions richly dight; and the maiden said, 'These are the pavilions of Sir Persant of Inde, and about him are five hundred knights and gentlemen-at-arms.' 'It may be,' answered the youth; 'but if he be a knight brave and courteous, as you say, he will not set upon me with all his men or with his five hundred knights: and if there come against me but one at a time, I shall not fail while my life lasts.' 'Fie,' said the maiden, 'that such a knave as thou shouldest boast thus.' 'It boots not to talk,' he answered; 'let him come and do his worst.' Then said the damsel, 'I marvel who thou mayest be, for never has a woman ruled a knight so fully and shamefully as I have ruled you, and yet hast thou ever

treated me courteously; nor could any do this who came not of gentle blood.'

'Maiden,' said the youth, 'a knight is worth little who cannot suffer a damsel. I took no heed to thy words, but the more they angered me, the more I wreaked my wrath on those with whom I had to do. And so it is that all thy foul words have furthered me in my battles.' 'Alas!' she said, 'forgive me for all that I have said or done amiss against thee.' 'With all my heart,' he answered; 'for, to say sooth, all thy evil words pleased me.' Even so it came to pass in the battle with Sir Persant that the youth was conqueror; and the damsel was no more loth to pray for his life; and Sir Persant said, 'Well, I wot now that thou didst slay my brother, the black knight, and didst overcome my brethren, the green and the red knights. And now shalt thou have homage and service of me and of my hundred knights.' That night they lodged with Sir Persant, who asked the maiden whither she was leading her knight, and she said that he was going to the help of her sister, who was besieged in her castle. 'Ah,' said Persant, 'he who besieges her is the knight of the Red Lawns, a man without mercy, and with the strength of seven men. God save you from that knight, for he doth great wrong to that lady, who is one of the fairest ladies of the world, and your damsel is, I think, her sister. Is not your name Linet?' 'It is,' she said, 'and my sister's name is Liones.' Then Sir Persant told the youth that the Knight of the Red Lawns might have won the lady many times, but that he kept up the siege because he wished to do battle with some great knight, such as Sir Lancelot, or Sir Tristram, or Sir Lamorak, or Sir Gawaine. 'God speed you well,' said Sir Persant; 'for if thou canst match the red knight, ye shall be called the fourth knight of the world.' Then said the youth, 'I would fain be of good fame; but my father was a noble man, and, so that ye will keep it close, I will tell you who I am.' 'Nay, we will not discover you,' said they, 'till ye bid us.' 'Truly, then, I am Gareth of Orkney, the son of King Lot and of King Arthur's sister; and my brothers are Sir Gawaine, and Sir Agravine, and Sir Gaheris, and I am the youngest of them all. Yet neither Arthur nor Gawaine know who I am.'

Then went a dwarf to the lady who was besieged, and brought the tidings that the youth was coming to her aid, and told her all his story from the hour when he was made a knight by Lancelot; and the lady rejoiced at the news, and bade the dwarf

go to an hermitage hard by, and make ready food and wine for the youth, that he might be refreshed.

As the dwarf went back from the hermitage, he met the Knight of the Red Lawns, who asked him whence he came: and the dwarf said that he had been with Dame Liones' sister, who had brought a knight with her. 'Then is her labour but lost,' said the knight; 'for were it Lancelot, Tristram, Lamorak, or Gawaine, I think myself good enough for them all. Is he, then, one of these four?' 'Nay, he is not,' said the dwarf, 'but he hath passed all the perilous passages, and conquered all with whom he has fought.' 'What is his name?' asked the red knight. 'That will I not tell you,' said the dwarf, 'but Sir Kay in scorn called him Prettyhands.' 'I care not,' answered the knight: 'whosoever he be, he shall die a shameful death.'

On the morrow, the youth and the maiden Linet rode after mass through a fair forest, and came to a plain with a goodly castle and many pavilions and tents, and in one part were great trees on which hung the bodies of nearly forty knights. 'What means this?' asked the youth. 'These are the knights,' answered Linet, 'who sought to deliver my sister from the Knight of the Red Lawns; for all who are overcome by him die by a shameful death.' Then fast by a sycamore tree he saw a horn hanging, of elephant's bone. 'Blow not the horn,' said Linet, 'to challenge the red knight till it be noon, for till that hour his might increaseth, so that, as men say, he has the strength of seven men. But the youth, heeding her not, blew the horn so eagerly that all the castle rang again; and the Red Knight of the Red Lawns armed him hastily, and blood red was his armour and his shield, and his men brought him a red spear and a red steed.

'Be glad and light now,' said Linet to the youth, 'for yonder is your deadly foe, and at yonder window is my sister Liones.' When the youth looked up and saw her fair face as she looked down kindly upon him, he said he could ask for no better quarrel, and that she alone should be his lady always.

Then was fought a fight more fierce than any that had gone before. From prime to noontide, from noontide to evensong, their blows fell thick as hail, till all their bodies were gashed and men might see their bare flesh, as the blood streamed out in rivers.

Then at last they stopped to rest, for their hands were too weary to strike more; and as they bared their faces to the cool wind, the youth saw Liones looking down upon him lovingly from her window, so that his heart waxed light and merry, and

he rose up to do battle again to the death. At the first the red knight had the best, but in the end the youth smote the sword out of his hand, and then he unlaced his helmet, as though he were about to slay him. Then the red knight yielded him to the youth's mercy; but Sir Gareth remembered the knights whose bodies he had seen hanging on the trees, and he said that he could show no mercy to murderers. 'Nay, but hear me,' said the red knight. 'The lady of my love had her brother slain, she said, by Lancelot or Gawaine; and she bade me promise, if I loved her, to put to a shameful death such knights as I might conquer.' Then came others also and prayed for the red knight's life; and to those Sir Gareth said, 'I am loth to slay this knight, though he has done shamefully; but he shall have his life if he will go first and yield him to the lady of the castle, begging her forgiveness, and thence go to King Arthur's court and ask mercy for all the evil that he has wrought.' Even so it came to pass; and when the red knight yielded himself to Arthur and Gawaine, they marvelled who this youth might be who had borne himself so knightly. 'Marvel not,' said Lancelot, 'he shall do more wondrous things yet than these.' 'Thou knowest then his name and whence he comes,' said Arthur. 'Yea, I do; but he charged me not to discover him until he bade me do so.'

Now after the battle Sir Gareth hastened to the castle, for he was eager to talk with Liones; but when he drew near to the gate, he found the drawbridge pulled up and the port closed; and looking up he saw Liones at a window, who said, 'Go thy way, Sir Knight, for I may not wholly give thee my love, till thou have a place among the number of the worthy knights. When twelve months have passed thou shalt hear new tidings.' 'Alas!' said Gareth, 'I have served you well, and I weened not to be thus treated.' 'Nay,' said Liones, 'be not hasty nor wroth. Thy toil and thy love shall not be lost. Wherefore go on thy way with a merry heart, and trust me that ever I shall love thee and none other.' Then Gareth rode away, but all his strength was gone for very sorrow; and that night he was lodged in a poor man's house, and as the hours wore on, still he writhed for the love of the lady of the castle.

On the morrow he arose and rode to a broad-water, where three hours before noon he lay down to rest with his head on his shield, when he had given his horse to the dwarf, bidding him watch beside him. Meanwhile, Liones had called to her brother, Sir Gringamore, and charged him to go and bring away Sir Gareth's dwarf, for she said, 'Until I know his name and of

what kindred he is come, I shall never be merry at heart.' So Sir Gringamore hasted and finding the dwarf watching by his master's side, he rode away with him as fast as he could to his own castle. But the dwarf, as he went, cried out aloud to Sir Gareth, and Gareth awaking saw Sir Gringamore hastening away. Then over hill and dale, through marshes and fields he rode furiously after Gringamore, who had reached his castle and brought the dwarf before Liones. Then the lady asked him straightway of his master's name and kindred, and the dwarf made not much ado to tell her all, and then he prayed to be sent back to his lord again. But even as he spake, Sir Gareth came in at the gate with his drawn sword in his hand, and crying, 'Thou traitor, set free my dwarf, or I shall do thee all the harm that I can.' Then would there have been hot words and hard blows, if Liones had not stayed her brother, and told him that now she sought for nought else but to speak with the knight who had rescued her out of the hand of the Knight of the Red Lawns. So Sir Gringamore went to Gareth and cried him mercy, and led him by the hand into the hall where his own wife was; and thither presently came Liones, and the youth could not take his eyes off her as she sat before him. 'Would,' he said, 'that the lady of the Perilous Castle were so fair as she.' So ever, as the hours wore on, his love for her waxed greater and greater; and Sir Gringamore, seeing it, told his sister that even if she was better than she was she would be well bestowed upon him, and after he had talked with her awhile, he went to Sir Gareth and said, 'My sister is yours, for she loves you as well as ye do her, and better if better may be.' Then answered Gareth, 'There lives not a gladder man than I;' and he went to Liones and kissed her many times, and she promised to love him and none other all the days of her life, and told him withal that she was the lady for whom he had done battle before the Perilous Castle.

In the night, as Gareth lay down to sleep in the hall, he saw coming towards him a knight with a grim countenance, having a long battle-axe in his hand; and leaping from his couch, he rushed at him with his drawn sword, and after a short while smote off his head from his body; but he was bleeding so that he swooned away, and the cry of Liones who found him thus called forth Sir Gringamore, who asked how these things had been done. 'I know not,' said Liones, 'for it was not done by me nor by mine assent.' Likewise said her brother, and they strove to stanch his bleeding as well as they might. Then came the damsel Linet, and taking up the head that had been smitten

off anointed it with an ointment; and when she placed it on the neck, the knight leaped up whole as he had been, and Linet put him in her chamber. Then said Gareth to her, 'I weened not that ye would thus deal by me;' but she said, 'Tarry yet awhile, and thou shalt see that all which I have done shall be for your honour and worship.'

On the next night Gareth saw coming to him again the man whose head he had cut off, and there was again a fierce strife between them, until Gareth smote off his head again; and this time he hewed it in pieces, and flung them out of a window into the castle ditch. But so had he strained himself that his old wound bled afresh, and he had swooned away when Liones and her brother came to him. Then as they strove to stanch the bleeding, Linet gathered the pieces of the head from the ditch of the castle, and anointed them as she had done before, and when she had put them together the knight was alive again. 'I have not deserved this at thy hands,' said Sir Gareth. 'Tarry yet a little,' answered the maiden, 'and thou shalt see that I have done all for thy honour and worship.'

At Pentecost, when Arthur made high festival, there came the green knight with fifty knights and yielded him to the king. After him came the red knight, and did homage with sixty knights, and after him the blue knight with an hundred knights, and these three told how they had been overcome by a knight named Prettyhands. 'I marvel,' said the king, 'what knight that is, and of what lineage he is come; for he was with me a year, and but poorly was he fostered, and Sir Kay called him Prettyhands in scorn.' But even as he spake Sir Lancelot came to tell him that there stood without a goodly lord with six hundred knights, and the king went to them and asked their errand. 'Sir,' said the knight, 'I am Sir Ironside, the Red Knight of the Red Lawns, and a knight named Prettyhands has charged me to yield myself to you; and never until he came had knight been able to withstand me these thirty winters.' 'Ye are welcome,' said the king, 'for I trust to have thee now as much my friend as thou hast been my foe, and if thou wilt hold of me I will make thee a knight of the Round Table: but then thou must be no more a murderer.' 'Yea,' said Sir Ironside, 'that I have sworn already to Sir Prettyhands, and now must I pray forgiveness from Sir Lancelot and Sir Gawaine.' 'God forgive you,' said they, 'as we do; and we pray you tell us where we may find Sir Prettyhands.' 'That I cannot tell,' said Sir Ironside. Then as all spake in his praise, the king said, 'I shall do

you honour for the love of Sir Prettyhands, and as soon as I meet with him, I will make you all upon one day knights of the Round Table.' Then turning to Sir Persant, the red knight, he said, 'I marvel that I hear not of the black knight, thy brother,' and they told the king how he had been slain by Sir Prettyhands.

Now while yet they kept the feast there came the Queen of Orkney, Arthur's sister; and her three sons, Gawaine, Agravaine, and Gaheris, knelt at her feet to ask her blessing. But turning to the king she asked, 'What have you done with my youngest son, Gareth? He was amongst you for a year, and ye made him a kitchen knave, which is shame to you all.' 'Alas! mother,' said Sir Gawaine, 'I knew him not.' 'Nor I,' said the king, 'but he is now a worshipful knight as is any now living, and I shall never be glad till I may find him. But sister, ye might have warned me of his coming, and then if I had not done well to him ye might have blamed me.' So the king told her all his story, and his sister said that she had sent him forth right well-armed and horsed, and with plenty of gold and silver. 'We saw none of this,' said Arthur, 'till the day when he went away, and then some knights told me that a dwarf had come bringing him a goodly horse and splendid armour, and we marvelled all whence those riches might come.' Then said the Queen of Orkney, 'I marvel that Sir Kay did mock and scorn him, and yet he named him more righteously than he thought, for, I dare say it, he is a man as fair-handed and well disposed as any living.' 'Sister,' said Arthur, 'let all this pass, and be merry, for he is proved to be a right true man, and that is my joy.'

Then would Gawaine and his brethren go forth to seek their brother, but Sir Lancelot stayed them and counselled the king to send messengers to the Perilous Castle, bidding Liones come to the court in all haste. When Sir Gareth heard this he said to Liones, 'That is because of me, and I would have you now advise the king that he hold a tourney on the feast of the Assumption of our Lady, and to say what knight there proves him best shall wed you and have your land.' Even so Liones gave this counsel to the king, and with all care they made ready for the tournament. Then at Linet's bidding Liones sent for Sir Persant of Inde, and for Sir Ironside, to come with all their knights, and through many countries far and wide was the cry made that men should come to the Perilous Castle beside the isle of Avilion, and there choose which side they should take in the tourney. So were gathered together kings and princes, barons and chiefs, and noble knights from England and from Scotland, from Brittany

and Wales, and Gareth prayed Liones and her knights that there should none of them tell his name. Then said Liones to Gareth, 'I will lend you a ring which I pray you give back to me when the tournament is done, for it increaseth my beauty much more than it is of itself; and its virtue is that that which is green it will turn to red, red to green, blue to white, and white to blue, and so with all manner of colours. Moreover, he who bears this ring shall lose no blood.'

So when the day was come, and the mass was done, the heralds blew the trumpets, and the knights came together in the fight, and many knightly deeds were done on both sides. But of Sir Gareth all men marvelled who he might be that one time seemed green and another time blue or red, and before whom every knight went down. 'Truly,' said King Arthur to Lancelot, 'that knight with the many colours is a good knight. Go thou and encounter with him.' 'Nay,' said Lancelot, 'when a good knight has had so great labour, it is no good deed to rob him of his worship; and it may be that he is best beloved by the Lady of the Perilous Castle among all that be here. Therefore, as for me, this day he shall have the honour, for though it lay in my power to put him from it, I would not.'

At the last, when Sir Gareth had wrought wondrously among all the knights, he rode out on the one side to drink; and his dwarf said, 'Give me your ring, that you lose it not while you drink.' So he left the ring with the dwarf, who knew now that Sir Gareth would be made known; for now, wherever he was seen, he was in yellow colours which changed not. And at Arthur's bidding the heralds came and saw written in letters of gold about his helm, 'This helm is Sir Gareth's of Orkney:' and they cried aloud, that all might hear, 'This is Sir Gareth, of Orkney, King Lot's son.' When Gareth saw that he was discovered, he doubled his strokes and smote down his brother Sir Gawaine. 'O, brother,' said Gawaine, 'I thought not you would strike me.' Then Gareth gat him out of the press, and bade the dwarf yield up the ring, that so men might know him no more. So he took it, and then they all wist not what had become of him; and afterwards he took counsel with the dwarf, who bade him send the ring back to Liones, and say that he would come when he might. With this message the dwarf hastened to the lady, while Sir Gareth rode amid thunder and rain through a dark forest until he came to a castle, and prayed the porter to let him in, for he was sore wearied. Then the porter went to tell the duchess that a knight of Arthur's court prayed for lodging, and the duchess rose up and

came to Gareth and said, 'Sir Knight, the lord of this castle loves not King Arthur nor his court; and therefore it were better thou shouldst not come within this castle. If thou dost come, it must be under pledge that thou wilt yield thyself to him in whatsoever place thou mayest meet him.' So Gareth promised, and then she let the drawbridge down, and there he rested that night.

On the morrow he rode to a mountain where a knight named Bendelaine sought to bar his way, and Gareth smote him so that Bendelaine rode to his own castle and there died. But when Gareth drew near to it, there came out twenty of Bendelaine's men, who slew Gareth's horse when they saw that they could overcome him in no other way. But when he was on foot, they prevailed none the more against him. At the last, when he had well nigh slain them, he took the horse of one of them, and rode till he came to a castle where he heard great cries and moaning of women; and he asked a page, who passed by, what these sounds might mean. And the page said that there lived here a pitiless knight who had shut up thirty ladies in his dungeons. This knight Sir Gareth fought with and slew; and going into the castle, he set the ladies free. On the morrow morn, when he went to mass, he saw the thirty ladies kneeling upon divers tombs, and he knew that in those tombs lay their lords, whom the pitiless knight had slain. Then he charged them to go at the next feast of Pentecost to the court of King Arthur and say that Sir Gareth had sent them thither. After this he went his way, and met the Duke de la Rowse, the husband of the duchess in whose castle he had lodged, and would have yielded himself to him. But the duke would have him fight; and Gareth smote him, and conquered him, and charged him to go and yield himself to King Arthur; and when the duke was gone, there came another knight with whom he fought, and so fierce was the strife that the blood ran in streams upon the ground. At last there came the maiden Linet, and when she saw them, she cried aloud, 'Sir Gawaine, Sir Gawaine, leave thy fighting with thy brother Sir Gareth.' So soon as he heard these words, he threw away his sword, and running to his brother took him in his arms and craved his mercy. Then they embraced each the other, and wept a great while before they could speak: and Sir Gawaine besought Linet to go to the king, and tell him in what plight he was. And she found Arthur but two or three miles off, and the king hastened on his palfrey: but when he drew nigh to the place where Gawaine and Gareth were seated on the hill side, he

sought to speak but could not, and he sank down in a swoon for gladness. So they hastened to their uncle and bade him be of good comfort; and the king was right glad, but withal he wept as he had been a child. And after him came Arthur's sister, their mother, and she too swooned away for gladness. There they tarried for eight days till the wounds of Gawaine and Gareth were healed. Then said Arthur to Linet, 'Why comes not thy sister to see a knight who hath loved her so well and wrought so much for her?' And Linet said, 'She knows not that he is here.' Then the king bade her go and charge Liones to come straightway; and when she was come, he asked Gareth whether he would have her for his wife. 'Yea,' said Gareth, 'I love her above all women living.' And of Gareth Liones said, 'He is my first love, and he shall be my last.' So was it agreed that they should be married on the coming Michaelmas at Kinkenadon by the sea; and Gareth sent his summons to all the knights and ladies whom he had conquered or rescued, that they should be on his marriage-day at Kinkenadon on the sands. So upon Michaelmas-day, they were wedded by the Bishop of Canterbury, and on the same day Gaheris wedded the damsel Linet, and Agravaine married Dame Laurel: and at the high feast which followed Arthur made Sir Persant of Inde and his two brothers, and the Red Knight of the Red Lawns, and the Duke de la Rowse, knights of the Round Table. But when the Jousts were done, Sir Lamorak and Sir Tristram departed suddenly, and at this the king and his fellows were sore displeased.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HISTORY OF SIR TRISTRAM.

AMONG the kings who held their lands of Arthur was Meliodas, King of Liones, who had a meek and gentle wife named Elizabeth. But there was another lady who loved him, and one day when he was hunting she lured him to chase a hart by himself alone, till he came to a castle where she made him prisoner. Sore was the grief of Elizabeth when her lord came not back, and she went forth to search for him through the dark forest, and there was her child born, and then she knew that she must die. So as her strength failed her, she bade the woman who was with her to

carry the child to the king. 'Let him call it Tristram,' she said; 'for he is the child of sorrow. Ah, my child! as thou hast brought so much woe at thy birth, thou art full likely to be a manly man in thine age. But Merlin rescued King Meliodas from his prison, and when he came home there he found the child of sorrow, and they told him that the fair and gentle lady, his wife, was dead. For seven years the king abode lonely in his grief, and then he married the daughter of Howel, the King of Brittany, and when this queen saw her children around her she hated Tristram, and placed poison in a silver cup that the boy might drink it and die. But her eldest son spied the cup, and he drank of it and straightway fell dead. Yet she put more poison in the cup; and when King Meliodas came in and would have drunk the wine, she dashed the cup from his hand. 'Ah, traitress,' said the king, for he remembered that her son had fallen dead suddenly, 'tell me what manner of drink this is, or I will slay thee.' So she told him all, and she was judged to be burnt. But when they tied her to the stake, Tristram besought his father for a boon. 'What wouldst thou have?' asked the king. 'The life of the queen,' answered Tristram. 'Nay,' said the king, 'that is not rightly asked, and chiefly for thy sake she ought to die.' Nevertheless, Tristram prayed yet again for her life, and the king gave word that it should be as he desired, but he would no more have Tristram abide at his court. So he sent him to France for seven years, and at the end of that time the boy came back again to his home. There he learnt to be a harper passing all other harpers that ever lived; and more than all others he had skill in hunting and hawking, and all the names that are for those sports were made by him.

Now it came to pass that the King of Ireland sent a messenger to King Mark of Cornwall to ask truage for his kingdom. And King Mark said, 'I will pay truage no more: if it please your master let him send a knight to do battle for him, and I will find another to do battle for me.' Then the King of Ireland prayed Sir Marhaus, who was a knight of the Round Table, to fight for his cause; and King Mark, when he came, knew not whom he might set in array against him, for no knight of the Round Table would fight with him. So as his messengers sped throughout the land Tristram heard the tidings, and having sought leave of his father, he hastened to King Mark and said, 'I come from King Meliodas, who wedded thy sister; make me a knight and I will fight with Sir Marhaus.' Then King Mark welcomed him joyfully and though he saw that he was but a youth, he made him

a knight, and sent a messenger to Sir Marhaus with letters saying a knight would come forth presently to do battle with him. 'It may well be,' said Sir Marhaus, 'but go back and say I fight with none who is not of royal blood.' When King Mark heard this he said to Tristram, 'Who art thou?' and he answered, 'I am the son of King Meliodas, and the child of thy sister, who died in the forest when I was born.' Then was King Mark right glad, and he sent letters to Sir Marhaus to say that it was even the son of a king and queen who should do battle with him: and Sir Marhaus also was well pleased.

Long they fought together, until at last Sir Marhaus wounded Tristram in his side with his spear; and when they had fought for many hours more, Tristram waxed stronger and smote with his sword through the helmet of Marhaus so fiercely that the sword stuck in the helm, and when he pulled it out, a piece of the blade was left in the head of Sir Marhus. Then Sir Marhaus fled groaning, and would turn no more to fight with Sir Tristram; and he sailed away to Ireland, but he had not been many days in the king's house when he died, and the piece of Tristram's sword was found in his head, and the queen kept it.

But Tristram also was sore wounded, for the spear of Marhaus was poisoned; and there came a wise woman who said that he might never be healed but in the land from which the venom came. So Tristram went into the ship with his harp, and came to the court of the King of Ireland, and at the gate he harped so sweetly that the king sent for him and welcomed him gladly, and gave him in trust to his daughter Isolte, to heal him. And so she did; but with the healing she gave him also her love, for he taught her to harp, and she could not withstand the spell of his sweet music. But another knight loved Isolte, and he was Sir Palamides the Saracen

Now it came to pass that the King of Ireland proclaimed a great tourney for the lady of the lawns, who should be given to be wife of the knight who should do most valiantly. Then said Isolte to Tramtrist (for so had he called himself since he came to her father's house), 'Wilt thou not joust in this tourney?' 'I am but a young Knight,' answered Tristram, 'and in my first battle I was sore wounded: but if thou wilt keep my name secret, I will go forth to the field.' 'Do so,' she said, 'and I will bring thee a horse and armour.' When the day came for the jousting to begin, Sir Palamides came with a black shield and smote down many knights of the Round Table; and on the second day too he was doing wondrously, when the fair Isolte arrayed Tramtrist in

white harness and placed him on a white horse; and he came into the field as it had been a bright angel; and when he had smitten down Sir Palamides, he charged him to forsake the maiden Isolte, and to wear no harness for a twelvemonth and a day. Then was Tramtrist in great honour; but as he tarried yet in the house of the King of Ireland, it chanced that the queen saw his sword in his chamber, and when she took it up, she marked that a piece was lacking from the edge. In great wrath she hastened to fetch the piece that was found in the head of Sir Marhaus; and when she fitted it to the sword, the weapon was whole. Then fiercely griping the sword, she hurried to the bath where Tristram lay, and would have slain him, but a knight who was with him thrust her back. And when she was thus hindered, she went to the king to make her plaint against Tramtrist, saying that he was the traitor knight who had slain Sir Marhaus. 'Leave me to deal with him,' said the king. So he sent for Tristram, and said, 'Tell me all thy story, and if thou hast slain Sir Marhaus.' So he told him all and the king was well satisfied, but he said, 'I may not maintain you here, unless I displease my barons, my wife, and her kin.' Then answered Tristram, 'I go my way; but ever shall I bear in mind your kindness, and the goodness of your daughter, who healed me of my grievous wound; and of her now let me take farewell.'

So was Tristram brought unto Isolte the Fair; and there was great sorrow between them when he told her all his story, and why he had hidden his name from her, and how that he must now depart from the land. 'All the days of my life,' he said, 'I shall be your knight;' and he gave her a ring and she gave him another; and he went his way and sailed to Cornwall, and went first to his father Meliodas and then to King Mark. But now the friendship of King Mark was changed to jealousy, for both he and Tristram loved the same lady, and she was the wife of the Earl Sir Segwarides. So it came to pass that the lady sent a dwarf to Tristram, praying him to come and help her; and King Mark heard it, and when Tristram set forth, he hastened after him, and both were wounded in the fight; and Tristram rode forth bleeding to the lady's house, and there she made him good cheer, and would have him tarry with her; but there came tidings that the earl was nigh at hand, and Tristram hastened away, and after him presently rode the earl, who was smitten as King Mark had been smitten before him.

Yet a few days, and there came a knight of the Round Table, and at his prayer King Mark promised to give him whatsoever

he might ask. And the knight asked for the fairest lady in the court, 'and this is the wife of Sir Segwarides.' So he took her away, but the earl was wroth and rode after the knight, and again he was smitten; and the tidings were brought to the court of King Mark. Then was Tristram ashamed and grieved, and hurrying away he came up with the knight, who, after a sore battle, yielded him, and it was agreed between them that the lady should go with the man whom she might choose. So she stood before Tristram and said, 'Thou wast the man whom I most loved and trusted, and I weened that thou hadst loved me above all: but when this knight led me away, thou didst suffer the earl, my lord, to ride after me to rescue me, and therefore now will I love thee no more, and I pray this knight to lead me to the abbey where my lord lieth.' And even so it was done.

But so great now was the hatred of King Mark for Tristram that he sought how he might destroy him: and he charged him to go to Ireland and bring back for him the fair Isolte to be his bride. So he set off with the goodliest knights that were in the court: but the winds drove back the ship to Camelot; and at this time it chanced that the King of Ireland was summoned to Arthur's court on pain of forfeiting his lands and the king's good grace, and when he was come, Sir Blamor de Ganis charged him with having slain his brother; wherefore the King of Ireland must fight either with his own body or by his champion. When Sir Tristram heard these things from his esquire, he rejoiced that he might now requite all the kindness which he had received at the hands of the king in his own country, and he hastened to him and said that he would fight in his quarrel if he would only swear that he had not been consenting to the knight's death, and that after the battle he would give him the reward for which he might ask. So fought Tristram with Blamor de Ganis who would not yield him when he had been smitten, but desired Tristram that he should slay him forthwith. At this Tristram started back, for he thought it foul shame that so brave a knight should be slain, and he besought the judges of the field that they would take the matter into their own hands. So after much striving, they took up Sir Blamor, and he and his brother were made friends that day with the King of Ireland and Sir Tristram.

After this the king asked Tristram what boon he desired to have; and Tristram said, 'Give me Isolte the Fair, to be the wife of mine uncle King Mark, for so have I promised him.' 'Nay,' said the king, 'far rather would I that thou shouldst take

her for thyself: but if thou wilt give her to thine uncle, thou mayest do so.'

So was Isolte taken to the ship; but the queen her mother had given unto her damsel Brengwaine a drink that Isolte and King Mark might drink to each other on the day of their wedding, and then must they love each other all the days of their life. But it so happened that while the ship was yet on the sea, as Isolte and Tristram sat in the cabin, they spied the little golden vessel, and Tristram said, 'Here is the best wine that ever ye drank, which Brengwaine and my esquire have kept for themselves.' Then they drank to each other, and when they had so done, they loved each other so well that never their love departed for weal or for woe. But there were hard things to be done yet, before they should come to the palace of King Mark, for the ship was driven to the Weeping Castle, which was so called because all knights who came thither had to fight with the lord of the castle, and if the ladies who came with them were less fair than the lady of the castle, they must lose their heads, but the lady of the castle must lose hers, if any stranger should come fairer than she. And so now it came to pass, for Isolte was judged fairer far, and the head of the lady of the castle was stricken off; and afterward Tristram slew Sir Brennor, her lord.

Now Sir Brennor the Savage was the father of the good knight Sir Galahad, who now fought against Tristram, aided by the king with the hundred knights; and Tristram yielded himself, more for the number of Galahad's men than for the might of his hands. Then Galahad sware friendship with him, for he hated the evil customs of his father and his mother whom Tristram had slain; and he besought Tristram to go to Sir Lancelot du Lake. Then said Tristram, 'Of all the knights in the world I most desire his fellowship.'

Then they went again to the sea, and came to the city of King Mark, and there were the king and Isolte richly wedded. But some who were moved by hate and envy took the maiden Brengwaine, and bound her hand and foot to a tree, where Sir Palamides found her and took her to a monastery, that she might regain her strength. But Isolte so grieved for the maiden's loss that she wandered into a forest, where by a well she met Sir Palamides, who promised to bring Brengwaine safe and sound, if Isolte would do the thing for which he might ask. And so glad was she of his offer, that unadvisedly she promised to grant that which he might desire. In a little while he came back with Brengwaine, and bade Isolte remember her promise, which he

could not ask her to fulfil save in the presence of King Mark: and in turn Isolte bade him remember that, albeit she had promised largely, she had thought no ill, and no ill would she do.

So Palamides rode after them, and when he saw King Mark he told him all that had happened, and demanded that the queen should do as she had promised. Then said the king, 'That which she has sworn must she do,' and Palamides answered, 'I will, then, that she go with me whithersoever I may lead her.' 'Take her,' said the king in wrath, 'for, as I suppose, ye will not keep her long.' So soon as they were gone the king sent for Tristram, but when he could nowhere be found, another knight said that he would go and fight with Sir Palamides. As these two knights fought, the fair Isolte sped away and a good knight who found her by a well-side led her towards his castle, and when Palamides came up the gates were shut, and he sat down before the gate like a man that is mazed. Thither soon came Tristram, and there was a fierce strife, in which Sir Palamides was smitten down, but the queen prayed for his life; and when Tristram had granted it, she said to Palamides, 'Take thy way to the court of King Arthur, and commend me to Queen Guenevere, and tell her from me that within this land there are but four lovers; and these are Sir Lancelot of the Lake and Queen Guenevere, and Sir Tristram of Lionesse and Queen Isolte.'

Then was there great joy when Tristram brought the queen back; but there was a traitorous knight named Andred who sought to do a mischief to his cousin Sir Tristram, and told false tales to King Mark, who believed his lies, and would have slain Tristram. But Tristram smote him down with the flat of his sword, and then taking his horse rode into the forest, where a troop of King Mark's men attacked him, but he killed some and wounded thirty more. Then King Mark took counsel with his barons what they should do, and they advised him to take Tristram into his grace, 'for,' said they, 'if he goes to King Arthur's court, he will get such friends there that he may well avenge himself of your malice.'

About this time it came to pass that as Sir Lamorak was riding with another knight, there came up one sent by Morgan le Fay, bringing with him for King Arthur a horn of such virtue that no women might drink of it but such as were true to their husbands, and if they were false, they would spill all the drink. 'Now,' said Lamorak to this knight, 'thou shalt bear this horn not to King Arthur but to King Mark; and if not, thou shalt die. And say to him that I sent the horn that he may make trial of his

wife.' When the knight had carried this message to the king, a hundred ladies were made to drink of the horn, and the wine was spilled by all save four: and they who spilled it were adjudged to be burnt. Then the barons gathered together and said plainly that they would not suffer this, because the horn came from as false a sorceress as any living; and many vowed that if they came across Morgan le Fay, they would show her scant courtesy.

But still Sir Andred played the spy on Sir Tristram and the fair Isolte; and one day when they were together, he set upon him suddenly with twelve knights and bound him hand and foot, and they led him to a chapel upon the sea rocks, there to take his judgment. When Tristram saw that there was no help but he must die, he brake silence and bade them remember how many good deeds he had done for King Mark and for his people. But Sir Andred reviled him, and drew his sword upon him. Then suddenly Tristram pulled in his arms and got his hands free, and leaping on Sir Andred he wrested his sword from him, and when he had smitten down Andred, he slew ten other knights. But when he saw the people draw nigh to him, he shut fast the chapel door, and breaking the bars of a window threw himself out upon the crags. There his esquire and some knights that were his friends saw him and lifted him up, and when he asked where Isolte was, they told him that she had been placed in a leper's house. 'She shall not be long there,' said Tristram, and with his men he rescued her and carried her away into a forest, and there abode with her. But one day while he slept in the wood, a man whose brother he had slain shot him through the shoulder with an arrow, and Tristram leaped up and killed the man; but the wound wrought him sore mischief, for the arrow with which he was hurt was poisoned. When Isolte the Fair heard it, she sent a damsel to Tristram, saying that she might not help him, because she was strictly shut up by King Mark, but bidding him go to Brittany to King Howel, whose daughter, Isolte of the White Hands, should heal him of his wound. And even so it came to pass; and Tristram did great deeds against the enemies of the king, and there grew up great love between him and Isolte, and at last she became his wife. When the tidings of this marriage were brought to Sir Lancelot, he said, 'Of all knights in the world I loved Tristram most; but now that he is false to his first love, Isolte the fair, the love between him and me is done for ever, and from this day forth I am his deadly foe.' And Isolte the Fair, when she heard that Tristram was wedded, wrote a letter tc Queen Guenevere, telling her how she had been forsaken

by the man whom most she had loved. Then wrote Guenevere, bidding her be of good cheer, 'for although by crafts of sorcery ladies might make noble knights like Tristram wed them, yet in the end it shall be thus, that he shall hate her and love you better than ever he had done before.'

Not long had Tristram been wedded when he went with his wife in a little barge; but the wind blew them away to the coast of Wales, to an island on which was Sir Lamorak, and there the barge was broken on the shore, and Isolte of the White Hands was hurt. By a well on that island, Tristram saw Sir Segwarides and a damsel, and Segwarides said, 'I know you for the man whom I have most cause to hate, because ye took away from me the love of my wife; but I will never hate a noble knight for a false woman; wherefore I pray thee now to stand by me, for we are sore bestead. Here dwells the giant Sir Nabon, who slays all the knights that he can seize of Arthur's court; and there is one of his knights wrecked upon these rocks, and we will bid the fishers bring him hither.' When he was come, Tristram knew Lamorak, but Lamorak knew not him; but when Tristram told him his story, and that his malice had not much hurt him, they made peace together, and fought with Sir Nabon and his knights. And Tristram slew Nabon and his son; and then all the people of the land said that they would hold of Sir Tristram. 'Nay,' said Tristram, 'that may not be; but here is the good knight Sir Lamorak who shall rule over you wisely and justly.' But neither would Lamorak have it, and so the land was given to Segwarides, who governed it worshipfully. And Lamorak went his way, doing many knightly deeds, to the court of King Arthur.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MADNESS OF SIR TRISTRAM.

Now there came at this time to the king a young man of a goodly form, whose coat, of rich golden cloth, sat ill across his shoulders. And when Sir Kay knew that he was named Sir Brennor the Black, he said that he should be called the Knight of the Ill-shapen Coat, for he thought scorn of him as he had done of the knight whom he called Prettyhands. But when the king asked why he wore that coat, the young man said that his father was hewn to death in it by his enemies, who fell on him when he was

asleep, and that he would wear it until he had revenged that deed upon them. Then he besought King Arthur to make him a knight, and Lamorak and Gaheris prayed him likewise, for they said, 'Even such a one was Sir Lancelot when he first came to this court, and now he is proved the mightiest knight in the world.' But before the king was able to knight him, the youth had done a great deed, for as he was left behind with Queen Guenevere a lion brake loose from a stone tower, and came furiously towards her, and while others fled for fear, the knight of the ill-shapen robe clave his head asunder. Wherefore he was made knight with the more honour.

That same day came a damsel bearing a shield, and she asked whether any knight there would take up the task which the owner of it had left undone, because he was sorely wounded; and when all others stood silent, the knight of the ill-shapen coat laid his hand on the shield and said that he would go. But the damsel reviled him, like the maiden who had reviled Sir Pretty-hands, and she said, 'If thou wilt follow me, thy skin shall be as well hewn as thy coat.' 'Nay,' said the youth, 'when I am so hewn, I will ask you no salve to heal me withal.' As they went on their way together, they were met by two knights, each of whom unhorsed the youth; but he said, 'I have no disworship for this, for neither would dismount and fight with me on foot.' Not long afterwards, a hundred knights assailed him at once; and he got off his horse and put himself against a chamber-wall, for he wished rather to die thus than to bear the rebukes of the damsel of the evil words; but as he stood and fought there, she came up slily and taking away the horse tied him by the bridle to the postern, and then, going to a window at his back, she called to him and said, 'Thou fightest wondrously well, Sir Knight; but nevertheless thou must die, unless thou canst win thy way to thy horse, which I have tied up to abide thy coming.' Then with a mighty effort the youth threw himself upon the throng, and, cleaving down one and then another, reached his horse and rode away. But the maiden who was talking with Sir Mordred deemed that he was either slain or taken prisoner; and when she saw the youth hastening towards her, she said that they had let him pass only as a dastard, and sent a messenger to ask how it came about that the knight of the ill-shaped coat had escaped from their hands. 'He is a fiend,' they said, 'and no man. He has slain twelve of our best knights, and neither Tristram nor Lancelot could stand before him.'

Then the youth rode with the damsel till they came unto the

castle called Pendragon, where five knights set upon him with spears, and, taking him prisoner, led him into the castle. But Lancelot du Lake heard tell how he had been taken captive and placed in dungeons where were many other knights and ladies belonging to King Arthur's court, and straightway fighting with the lord of the castle, he made him yield himself and swear to deliver up all his prisoners; and so Sir Lancelot rescued the knight of the evil-shaped coat from the hands of Sir Brian of the Isles; and he charged the damsel never more to rebuke the youth. Then said the maiden, 'Think not that I rebuked him because I hated him; nay, but I have loved him always;' and so likewise had the damsel spoken who rebuked Sir Prettyhands. 'Be it so,' said Sir Lancelot; 'and now thou shalt be called no more the Damsel with the Evil Words, but the Maiden of the Good Thoughts.' Then he made the youth with the evil-shapen coat lord of the Castle of Pendragon and all its lands; and there the youth wedded the maiden that had reviled him.

Now about this time, when Isolte the Fair had heard that Tristram was wedded to Isolte of the White Hands, she sent him letters as piteous as any that ever were written, beseeching him to come over with his bride, and saying that both would be right gladly welcomed. Then with Sir Kehydius, and the maiden Brengwaine, and his esquire, Tristram went into a ship, which the winds drove on the coasts of North Wales, near the Perilous Castle. There, riding away with Kehydius, Tristram met by the side of a well a knight with whom he jousted; and when he knew that it was Sir Lamorak of Wales, Tristram reproved him for the sending of the horn to King Mark's court, and he said, 'Now must one of us twain die.' Yet so knightly did Lamorak bear himself, that Tristram forgave him, and became his friend, and they sware that neither should ever hurt the other.

And now was King Arthur himself to face new perils, for the Lady Annowre, who was a great sorceress, came to him at Cardiff and by fair words made him ride with her into a forest, where she took him to a tower and sought to win his love. But the king thought only of Guenevere, and when Annowre could prevail nothing with him, she sent him forth into the forest that he might be slain. But the Lady Nimue of the Lake knew her wiles, and she rode about until she met Sir Tristram and bade him hasten to the succour of a right noble knight who was hard bestead. 'It is King Arthur himself,' she said; and Tristram was sore grieved, and putting spurs to his horse he soon reached a place where two knights had unhorsed one, and a maiden

which was Annowre, stood by with a sword drawn in her hand ready to slay him. Then like a thunderbolt Tristram dashed down on those knights and slew them, and he cried to the king, 'Let not that lady escape;' and Arthur seizing his sword smote off her head, which the Lady of the Lake bare away at her saddle-bow. Then Sir Tristram placed the king on his horse and rode with him until they met Sir Ector de Maris, with whom he left King Arthur: but he would not as at this time tell the king his name.

Then went Tristram back to his ship, and sailed away to Cornwall, and when they had landed, the maiden Brengwaine went with a knight to the court of King Mark to tell the queen that Tristram was nigh at hand. 'Let me speak with him,' said the fair Isolte, 'or my heart will break.' So the maiden went back and brought Tristram with Kehydius into a chamber which the queen had assigned. What joy there was now between Isolte the Fair and Tristram, tongue cannot tell nor pen write, nor the heart think. But Kehydius too was smitten with the love of Isolte, so soon as he had seen her; and of that love afterwards he died. And he wrote letters and ballads, the goodliest that were, to the queen, who in pity of his love and sorrow sent him a letter in return. This letter Tristram found one day when King Mark was playing at chess in the window: and full of grief and rage he rebuked Isolte for her treachery to him, and would have slain Kehydius; but when Kehydius saw what Tristram would do, he leaped from a window and escaped. And Tristram also went his way from the Castle of Tintagil, heeding not whither he went. In vain the lady of a great castle sought to make him good cheer. He would neither eat nor drink, and he wandered away again into the forest, and there he played upon his harp and wept, until his sorrow drove him mad. Even so he abode for three months, lean of flesh and ragged in raiment, among herdmen and shepherds, who held him to be a fool; and the deeds of a fool he did in his madness and his misery. But a little while and there came false tidings that Tristram was dead: and Isolte the Fair would have slain herself in her frenzy, if the king had not caught her when she was going to fall upon a sword. So was Isolte placed in a strong tower and strictly guarded.

But soon after this there came a knight to the palace of King Mark bearing a giant's head; and he told the king how when this giant would have slain him, a naked fool who lay by a well-side came and smote off his head. 'I will see that wild man,' said King Mark, and riding to the fountain, they found the man,

but knew not that it was Tristram. Nor did any know him when he was brought into the king's palace, not even Isolte the Fair, so grievously was he changed. But the little dog which he had given to the queen when first he brought her to Cornwall leaped upon him for joy, and then Isolte, knowing that Tristram was before her, swooned away for gladness. When she came to herself, she said but few words, for her heart was heavy. Only she prayed him to hasten to King Arthur's court, where he would be right welcome. 'If King Mark learns who thou art,' she said, 'he will seek to slay thee; and as for me, whenever I may, I shall send unto you, and ever to my dying day thou hast all my love.' And even as Isolte said, it came to pass, for the little dog which would not leave Tristram made him known to Sir Andred, who told the king, and the king sought to have Tristram judged to death: but because some of the barons would not suffer this, Tristram was banished out of the country for ten years. Then stood up Tristram and said, 'Ye have given me a goodly reward for all my deeds. Ye have recompensed me well for delivering this land from truage, for bringing the fair Isolte from Ireland, for rescuing the wife of Sir Segwarides, for smiting down Sir Lamorak of Wales, for doing battle with the king of the hundred knights, for saving the queen from the hands of Palamides, and for all else that I have done. Be ye sure I shall come again when I may.' And having thus said he departed; and soon he fell in with a damsel who was seeking knights to come and help Sir Lancelot, for the queen Morgan Le Fay had placed thirty knights who should set upon him as he passed by. And these knights Sir Tristram and his comrade Sir Dinadan fought with, and part of them they slew and the rest they put to flight.

But when Tristram had gone yet a little further, there met him another damsel, who told him that he should win much glory by doing battle with a knight who wrought great mischief in all that country. So he rode on with her, but after six miles Sir Gawaine met them, and he knew that the damsel was one of the maidens of Morgan le Fay, and his heart misgave him that she was leading away the knight to his hurt. So straightway drawing out his sword, he said, 'Tell me, damsel, whither thou art guiding this knight, or thou shalt die.' Then she cried for mercy, and told them how Morgan le Fay was plotting againgst Tristram the same treason which she had plotted against Sir Lancelot.

Thus through Sir Gawaine Tristram escaped this peril, and after this Sir Arthur held a great tournament. On the first day Tristram won the prize, but on the second after he had smitten

down Sir Gaheris, he went his way, and none knew whither he had gone; on the third day the prize was adjudged to Sir Lancelot, but he would not have it, for he said that by right it was Tristram's, who had done more than any other could do. But Tristram could not be found; and Lancelot with nine other knights sware that for a whole year they would not rest two nights in the same place until they had found Tristram and brought him back to the court. But Tristram was now shut up in the dungeons of Sir Darras, whose sons he had slain or wounded in the tourney; and then Tristram again became sick almost unto death, and in his knightly pity Sir Darras let him go with his fellows on this covenant, that he should be a good friend to the two sons of Sir Darras who still remained alive.

CHAPTER X.

THE TREASONS OF KING MARK AND PALAMIDES.

Now was the time come that Tristram should march himself with King Arthur, and thus it came to pass. The king seeing him with the shield which Morgan le Fay had given him, asked him to describe the arms, and to say whence he had it. Then Tristram told the king who it was that had given him the shield, but the arms he knew not how to describe. Then,' said he, 'tell me your name.' But when Tristram would not, the king challenged him to fight, and after a fierce struggle the king was unhorsed, and he said, 'We have that which we deserved.'

Then Tristram departed, and as he rode towards Camelot there met him a knight, clad all in white raiment, with a covered shield. And they fought together, not knowing who the other might be. At the last Sir Lancelot asked, 'Who art thou that fightest thus wondrously?' And Tristram said that he was loth to tell. 'Nay,' answered Lancelot, 'I was never loth to tell my name to any that asked it.' 'Then,' said Tristram, 'tell it to me now,' and when he knew that it was Sir Lancelot, he said, 'What have I done, for thou art the man that I love best in the world?' Then said Lancelot, 'Tell me thy name.' And when Tristram told him, Lancelot rushed down and yielded up his sword, and Tristram kneeling yielded his; and many times they kissed each other, and then went on their way to Camelot, where

they met with Gawaine and Gaheris, and Lancelot said to them, 'Your quest is done, for here is Sir Tristram.

Great was the joy of King Arthur's court that this noble knight had come back; and the king went to all the seats about the Round Table which lacked knights, and in the seat of Sir Marhaus, whom Tristram had slain, he saw the words written, 'This is the seat of the good knight Sir Tristram,' and so was Tristram made a knight of the Round Table.

But the more that his glory was spread abroad, the more King Mark of Cornwall hated him, and at last he left his own land to seek out Tristram and slay him: and strange things befell him as he went from one country to another, searching for him. For first he came to a fountain, and by it he heard Sir Lamorak of Wales making moan of his love for Arthur's sister, the wife of the King of Orkney, whom Pellinore slew: and when King Mark went to him and questioned him of his sorrow, Sir Lamorak knew him to be a Cornish knight, and rebuked him because he served the most traitorous king that ever lived. Next he came to a castle, where the lieutenant knew him to be the man who had murdered his father, and the lieutenant said, 'For the love of my lord, I will not hurt thee whilst thou art here; but when thou art beyond this lodging, I will do thee what harm I may, for thou didst slay my father treacherously.' And again another day he heard Sir Palamides as he mourned for his love of the fair Isolte, who would give no heed to his prayer. 'A fool am I to love thee,' he said, 'when thy love is given to Tristram only, and thou art the wife of a coward and a traitor. Alas! that ever so fair a lady should be matched with the most villainous knight of the world.'

Then without a word King Mark hastened away to Camelot, where the knight Amant had charged him with treason before Arthur; and the king bade him do battle with his accuser, and when they met, King Mark smote down Sir Amant, who was in the righteous quarrel.

Great was the grief of Tristram when he saw Amant stricken down for the love of himself and of the fair Isolte: and when Lancelot saw Tristram weeping, he prayed the king to let him go after King Mark. But when King Mark saw Lancelot, he would not fight. Falling straightway from his horse, he yielded himself as a recreant, and as a recreant was he brought back and shamed in King Arthur's court, and made to own himself the king's man. And the king said, 'This I bid thee, that thou shalt be a good lord to Sir Tristram, and that thou take him into Cornwall and

cherish him there for my sake.' This King Mark sware to do, and as he had done many a time before, so now he sware falsely. Then said Lancelot to King Arthur, 'What hast thou done? Knowest thou not that Mark is a traitor and a murderer?' And Arthur said, 'It was Tristram's own desire. I have made them of one accord: and what could I do more?' So as they went forth, Lancelot gave King Mark solemn warning. 'See that thou break not thy faith,' he said, 'with Sir Tristram: for if thou dost, with mine own hands I will slay thee.'

At this time it was that Sir Aglavale brought to King Arthur a young man whom he prayed him to knight; and he was Sir Percivale of Wales. When all things were ready, a maiden who had ever been dumb came into the hall, and going to Sir Percivale led him by the hand to the right side of the Perilous Seat, and said, 'Take here thy seat, fair knight, for to thee it appertaineth and to no other.' And when she had so said she went away and died.

Now the sons of the Queen of Orkney knew how Sir Lamorak loved their mother, and with the intent to slay him they sent for their mother to a castle near Camelot; and there, while Sir Lamorak was with her, Sir Gaheris came in with a drawn sword and smote off his mother's head. And great again was the grief in Arthur's court, that the sister of the king should thus be slain.

But now were the tokens seen of yet greater evils; for there came letters to Arthur from King Mark, bidding him look to himself and his wife and his knights, and not to meddle with the wives of others. When he had read this letter, he mused of many things, and he thought on the words of Morgan le Fay respecting Guenevere and Lancelot; but when he remembered how his sister hated the queen and Lancelot, he put away the thought. To Lancelot also King Mark sent letters; and Lancelot took counsel respecting them with Sir Dinadan, who said, 'I will make a lay of King Mark and teach it to many harpers.' And the worst lay it was that ever harper sang to his harp.

At this time came the men of Sessoins against King Mark to claim truage, and at the king's bidding Tristram did battle for him, and slew Sir Elias their leader. At the feast which followed, a harper came named Eliot, who sang Sir Dinadan's lay, and he escaped the king's vengeance only because he was a minstrel; and he was driven forth from the king's presence. But the king added now other treasons to his old crimes, for he murdered his own brother the good knight Sir Baldwin, who had burnt the

ships of the men of Sessoins by sending fire-ships among them; and Baldwin's wife, the Lady Anglides, took his bloody sark and kept it secretly. But yet more did the king seek to slay her son Alisander the orphan, and he charged Sir Sadok to do the deed. By and by, Sir Sadok came back and told the king that he had drowned the child; but he had let him go free with his mother. So passed the years away until Alisander was grown up; and on the day on which he was made a knight, his mother drew out the blood stained doublet and placed it in his hands. 'It is the shirt which thy father wore,' she said, 'when King Mark plunged the dagger in his heart.' And the young man said, 'Thou hast given me a great charge, my mother; and I promise thee, I will be avenged on King Mark when I may.'

When these tidings were brought to King Mark, he was sore dismayed, for he weened that Alisander was long ago dead, and he sought how to slay Sir Sadok, but Sir Sadok struck fear into his heart by his stern words; and King Mark sent instead to Morgan le Fay, and prayed her to set the country on fire through her sorceries, so that in anywise Sir Alisander might be slain. So Morgan stirred against him the knight Malgrin; and Sir Alisander fought with him, and although he was sorely wounded himself, yet slew he his enemy. Then Morgan le Fay took him to her own castle, and healed him of his wounds, when she had made him promise that for a twelvemonth and a day he would not pass the compass of the castle. And thus did he keep his oath. There came to him a damsel who said, 'If thou wilt give me thy love, I will deliver thee from Morgan le Fay, who keeps thee here that she may do with you as she will.' 'Tell me how thou wilt do this,' he said, 'and thou shalt have my love.' Then she said, 'I will send to my father, the Earl of Pase, and bid him come and destroy this castle, and after that thou shalt guard the ground on which it stands that none shall pass over it for a twelvemonth and a day.' And even so was it done; and Alisander let the heralds make a cry that he would keep that spot against all knights who came. Among these knights came Ansirus the Pilgrim, who went every third year to Jerusalem; and for this cause his daughter who was with him was called Alice the Fair Pilgrim. And Alice said in the hearing of many knights, 'He that overcometh the knight who keepeth that spot of ground where stood the castle of Morgan le Fay shall have me and all my lands.' But for all she said this, she went to Sir Alisander when he had smitten all the knights who went against him for the sake of Alice the Fair Pilgrim, and taking the bridle

of his horse, she said, 'Show me thy visage;' and when she saw it she said, 'Thee must I love always, and never any other.' 'Then lift thy wimple,' he said: and when he saw her face he said, 'Here have I found my love;' and in this wise kept he his troth to the maiden who rescued him from the hands of Morgan le Fay.

Meanwhile, there were fresh perils for Sir Tristram, for the counsel of certain knights, who hated Sir Lancelot, and would have slain him, was revealed to King Mark, who thought to send forth Tristram so disguised that these knights, taking him to be Lancelot, should follow him and slay him. In the fight which presently came about between them Tristram smote down the knights, but he was sorely wounded himself, and King Mark came to him feigning to be sorry; and saying that he would himself be his leech, he brought him to a castle and put him in a strong prison. But when there was a great outcry made among all good knights against this treason, King Mark thought how he might be rid of Tristram after another fashion. So he caused letters to be written in the Pope's name, bidding all good men go and fight against the Saracens at Jerusalem: and these letters he sent to Tristram, saying that if he would go forth on this errand, he should be set free. 'Bid King Mark go himself,' said Tristram, 'I stir not.' Then King Mark caused other letters to be written in which he made the Pope name Tristram among those who should go to the Holy City; but when Tristram looked at the letters, he knew whence they came, and he said, 'A liar and a traitor he hath ever been, and ever will be.' Not long after this came Sir Percivale of Wales, and by his means was Tristram brought out of prison; but although King Mark sware again to Percivale that he would do no more harm to Sir Tristram, yet he shut him up in prison again, because he found him with the fair Isolte. Then from his prison Tristram sent letters to her, saying that now, if she would go with him, he would take her away into King Arthur's country, since the treasons of King Mark were no longer to be borne. So the queen devised that King Mark should be shut up in prison, and while he was kept in bonds, she fled away with Tristram, and came to the court of King Arthur.

Right glad was the king to welcome them; and Sir Lancelot brought them to his own castle of Joyous Gard; and the days for them passed by like a happy dream. Yet did Tristram achieve many great things; and on one day he joined himself to Sir Dinadan who had made the lay on King Mark, and feigning to be but a poor feeble knight he thrust Dinadan on all manner of hard

tasks, so that he was sorely buffeted and wounded, and then putting forth his might, he smote down all who sought to fight with him; and much laughing and jesting there was afterward at Sir Dinadan for the toils which came upon him while he bare the helmet of Sir Tristram. So when this was told to the fair Isolte, she bade that Sir Dinadan should be brought before her; and when she asked him about Tristram, Dinadan marvelled that he and other knights could be so besotted upon women. 'What!' said Isolte, 'art thou a knight and no lover?' 'Nay,' said Dinadan, 'the joy of love is too short and the sorrow of it too long.' 'Say not so,' answered Isolte; 'here have been knights who have fought with three at once for the love of a maiden. Will you fight for love of me with three knights who have done me great wrong?' 'Thou art a fair lady,' answered Dinadan, 'fairer than even Guenevere: yet with three at once will I not fight whether for thee or for any other.' And all who heard him laughed, and merry was the feast that day.

At another time when Tristram went forth, he met a knight with whom he jousted. For a long time neither prevailed against the other, but at last Tristram threw down his enemy, and he asked his name. 'I am Sir Palamides,' he said. 'What is the man whom thou most hatest?' asked Tristram. 'It is Tristram of Liones; and if I meet with him, one of us twain shall die.' 'Do thy worst then,' said Tristram, 'for I am he.' But so was Sir Palamides astonished at these words that he prayed Tristram to forgive him all his evil will; and so was their long enmity brought to an end.

Then they went onward together for the great tournament which King Arthur would hold at the Castle of Lonazep: and as they drew nigh to Humber bank, they saw coming towards them a rich vessel covered with red silk, and it came to land close to them, and on it was a fair bed whereon lay a dead man in whose hand was a letter, saying how King Hermanec, Lord of the Red City, had been slain by two men whom he had most of all cherished and trusted, and beseeching the knights of King Arthur's court to send some one to avenge his death. 'I cannot go and avenge him,' said Tristram, 'for I have given a pledge that I will be at this tournament.' 'Then,' answered Palamides, 'I will go;' and the vessel bare him to the Red City, where the people welcomed him joyfully. But they said, 'Thou must go again in the barge, until thou shalt come to the Delectable Isle, where is the castle of the men who murdered our king.' When he was come thither and had got out upon the land, there met

him a knight who claimed the task of avenging King Hermanec as his own, but when this knight knew that it was Sir Palamides who had come to fight in this quarrel, he was right glad, and said, 'There are three knights only whom I had rather have met than thee: and these are Lancelot, Tristram, and my nigh cousin Lamorak of Wales.' 'Ye say well,' said Palamides, 'and if I be slain, go ye to Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristram and bid them avenge my death, for as for Sir Lamorak, him shall ye never see again in this world.' 'Alas!' said the knight, 'how may that be?' 'He is slain,' answered Palamides, 'by Sir Gawaine and his brethren, who slew their own mother because she loved him; but Sir Gareth, the fifth brother, and the best knight of them all, was away, and had nought to do with these foul deeds.'

Now were the tidings brought to the murderers of King Hermanec that Sir Palamides had come, an unchristened knight, to avenge him. 'If he be unchristened,' they said, 'christened he never will be, if he fights with us.' But for all their boasting, the two brothers were slain by the Saracen knight Palamides, who hastened away after this to the Castle of Lonazep, where he found not Tristram, for he had not yet come with the fair Isolte from Joyous Gard. So to Joyous Gard he went, and he saw once more the lady he had ever loved, Isolte the Fair; and so ravished was he with her beauty that he could scarcely speak or eat.

And from Joyous Gard they rode to Lonazep, as the time for the great tournament drew nigh; and there Tristram appeared before King Arthur, but he would not tell his name, although Arthur besought him much, neither would he say upon which party he would hold in the jousting. But afterwards he took counsel with Sir Palamides, who said that they should be against Arthur, who would have the greatest knights on his side, 'and the greater they are, the more worship shall we win, if we be better than they.' So on the morning Tristram and Palamides with Sir Dinadan and Gaheris rode forth clad all in green, and the fair Isolte rode with them. And when King Arthur saw them, he asked who they might be: but none knew. Then he said, 'See by the names in the sieges which of the knights of the Round Table are not here with us.' And among the names of those who were not there were the names of Tristram, Palamides, Gaheris, and seven others. Then said the king, 'Some of these, I dare to say, are against us here this day.' Then in the jousting were great deeds done, and Sir Lancelot first smote Tristram; but Tristram, recovering himself, hurled King Arthur from his

horse. Then going away from the field, he came back presently in red armour, that none might know him, and he placed on their horses Sir Palamides and some other knights who had been smitten down. But at this moment Palamides looking up saw the fair Isolte smiling at Tristam, for she alone knew him in his red armour; and Palamides, thinking that her smile was for him, felt himself filled with new strength, and from this time he fought like a lion, longing secretly in his heart that he might do battle to the death with Sir Tristram, his friend, because he had taken from him her love. And all men marvelled at the might of his arm, and the prize of this day was given to him. On the morrow, before the jousting began again, King Arthur rode forth with Sir Lancelot to greet the fair Isolte; but when she had welcomed the king, Palamides broke in with angry words, and when the king heeded not his wrath, Palamides took his spear and smote him down; and because Sir Tristram rebuked him for this deed, he determined to go over to the other side and fight with the man whom he called his friend. On this day Tristram put forth his strength, and Palamides wept that he might win no worship, for scarce any might hope to do so when Tristram used all his manhood. But when they had jousted for some time, Tristram went from the field and came back clad in black armour with Sir Dinadan; and Palamides also had disguised himself with a shield and armour which he had borrowed from a knight who was resting himself by the water-side. But for all his scheming, and though he strove with all his power against Tristram, yet was Tristram adjudged to be the best knight that day.

Full of wrath was Isolte against Palamides, for she had seen all his treachery, and how he had changed armour with the knight by the water-side. But Palamides feigned that he knew not Sir Tristram in his black armour, and Tristram forgave him for all that he had done. In the evening when the jousting was ended, there came two knights armed into the tent where the fair Isolte sat at meat with Sir Tristram and Palamides; but when Tristram rebuked them for coming armed, one of them said, 'We have come for no evil; I am here to see you, and this knight seeks to greet the queen.' 'Then doff your helms,' said Tristram, 'that I may see you;' and when they had done so, they knew that Arthur and Lancelot stood before them; and great was the joy and gladness between them. Then said Arthur to Isolte, 'Many a day have I longed to see thee, so highly art thou praised: and indeed thou art fair as fair may be, and well are ye beset with the good and fair knight Sir Tristram;' and his words filled the

heart of Palamides with bitter grief and rage, and all that night he wept sore for envy of his friend who had won the love of King Mark's wife.

On the next day too were great things done, but because Arthur's men were far fewer than they who were against them, Tristram said he would go over to the other side. Then answered Palamides, 'Do as thou wilt. I change not.' 'Ah!' said Tristram, 'that is for my sake, I dare to say; speed you well in your journey.' But because Palamides could not bear down Tristram in the jousts that day, his wrath grew more fierce, and in the evening when they came to the pavilions he called Tristram a traitor, and sware to slay him if ever he might. 'Well,' said Tristram, 'I see not why thou wilt not have my friendship; but since thou givest me so large warning I shall be well ware of you.' And all these things were told to Queen Guenevere, who lay sick in a castle by the sea-side. But more grievous still became the anguish of Sir Palamides, and he wandered about as one that is in a frenzy. 'Alas!' he said, 'I have lost the fellowship of Sir Tristram for ever, and for ever have I lost the love of Isolte the Fair; and now I am never like to see her more, and Tristram and I are mortal foes.' So, as he wandered along, he came to a castle where many were weeping, and when they saw Palamides they said, 'Here is the man who slew our lord at the tournament,' and for all he fought and struggled, they took him prisoner and adjudged him to death. And so it chanced that the tidings were brought to Sir Tristram, who said, 'Palamides has done me great wrong: yet must I rescue or avenge him, for he is too good a knight to be thus done to death.' On the morrow then he set forth with this intent: but as Sir Palamides was led forth to die Sir Lancelot met them, and straightway did battle with them until those who had not been wounded or hurt fled away. Then at Tristram's prayer Lancelot and Palamides went to the castle where the fair Isolte abode; and glad was she to welcome Sir Lancelot; but Palamides mourned more and more, until he faded away and all his strength departed from him. So wandering forth again, he came to a fountain, where he uttered all his complaint, and Tristram who chanced to be nigh heard it. So great was Tristram's wrath at the first that he thought to slay Palamides as he lay. But he remembered that Palamides was unarmed, and he checked himself, and going up to him he said, 'Thou art a traitor to me; how wilt thou acquit thyself?' 'Thus,' said Palamides; 'from the hour when first I saw her Isolte has been my love, and well I know that it shall befall me

as it befell Kehydius who died for her love. Through her only have I done all the deeds that I have done, and through all I have been her knight guerdonless, for no reward or bounty have I ever had from her. Wherefore I had as soon die as live: and for treason, I have done none to thee, for love is free to all men, and Isolte is my lady as well as yours, only that thou hast her love, and this had I never, nor shall I ever have it.' 'For all this,' said Tristram, 'I will fight with thee to the uttermost.' 'Be it so,' answered Palamides; 'on the fifteenth day I will be ready for thee.' 'What, art thou turned coward, that thou needst fifteen days to make thee ready for battle? Let us fight on the morrow?' 'It may not be,' said Palamides; 'my strength is gone for very grief and sorrow: but on the fifteenth I will not fail you.' But so it happened that when the fifteenth day was come, it was Tristram who could not keep the tryst, for one day in a forest an archer shooting at a hart hit Tristram, and gave him a grievous wound. At the end of a month he was whole: and then he took horse and sought everywhere for his enemy; but Sir Palamides could nowhere be found.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BIRTH OF THE GOOD KNIGHT GALAHAD.

Now one day when King Arthur sat with his knights at the Round Table, there came a hermit, who seeing the Siege Perilous empty asked wherefore it was void; and the king said that one only might sit in it and live. 'Who then is that one?' asked the hermit: and when they could not tell him, he spake again, and said, 'The man that shall sit there is yet unborn; but he shall be born this year and shall achieve the Holy Grail;' and having so said, he departed.

Soon after this, Lancelot also went his way until he came to the town of Corbin, where the folk welcomed him as their deliverer. 'What mean ye by your cries?' said the knight. Then they showed him a tower in which lay a maiden in great pain, for she boiled in scalding water, and none had been able to rescue her. She was the fairest maiden in all the land, and therefore Morgan le Fay had shut her up in the dismal tower, until the best knight of the world should take her by the hand. But as Lancelot drew near, the doors opened to him of their own will,

and on the couch he beheld the maiden, whose heart the fire had entered for many a long year. So was the damsel rescued from her enchantment, and the people said to Lancelot, 'Now must thou do yet another thing, thou must free us from a serpent that is here in a tomb.' Then as Lancelot came to the tomb, he saw written on it in golden letters, 'A leopard shall come of kingly blood, and shall slay this serpent, and from the leopard shall spring a lion which shall pass all other knights.' Even so it came to pass, for Lancelot slew the grisly snake, and the fair maiden Elaine became the mother of his child Galahad. And in the house of her father King Pelles, the cousin of Joseph of Arimathie, as they sat at meat, there came in at a window a dove, in whose mouth there seemed to be a censer of gold. With it there came a savour as of all the spicery in the world; and forthwith upon the table were seen all manner of meats and drinks. Presently there came a maiden bearing in her hands a vessel of pure gold, and before it the king and his knights kneeled and prayed devoutly. 'What may this mean?' said Lancelot: and the king answered, 'This is the richest thing that any child of man may have; and when it goes about, the Round Table shall be broken, for that which thou hast seen is the Holy Grail.'

But when Sir Lancelot saw Elaine in her father's house, he weened it had been Queen Guenevere, for he was brought under inchantment, and when he knew how he had been deceived, he would have slain the maiden, who with tears prayed him for her life, because she had given him her maiden love and faith. Then was Lancelot appeased, and the time went, and the child was born and named Galahad: and after this came another knight who had loved her long and sought to make her his wife. 'Nay,' she said, 'ask me never again. My love is set on the best knight in the world, and none other will I wed:' and when that knight knew to whom her love was given, he sware with an oath that he would slay Sir Lancelot.

But Lancelot was long since gone away, and Elaine asked Sir Bors who had come thither where the knight might be, and he told her how he was shut up in prison by Morgan le Fay, King Arthur's sister. But even as he looked on the babe in Elaine's arms, he marvelled how like it seemed to Sir Lancelot, and she said, 'Truly it is his child;' and even as she spake, once more the white dove hovered in with the golden censer. Once more came the savour of all delightsome spicery. Once more the maiden bare in the Holy Grail, and said, 'Know that this child shall sit in the Perilous Seat, and shall win the Sangreal, and he

shall be a better man far than the good knight Sir Lancelot his father.' Once more they kneeled and prayed before the golden vessel; once more the dove floated away, and the maiden vanished as she came.

On that day was Sir Bors clean shriven; and as he lay down on his couch at night, with his armour on, a light flashed round him, and there came in end-long a spear, whose head burned like a taper, and it gave him a grievous wound in the shoulder. Hard were now the toils of Sir Bors, for first he had to fight with a strong knight, and then with a huge lion; but he beat off the one and smote the other. Then going forth into the court, he beheld a dragon with golden letters on his forehead which seemed to show the name of King Arthur, and there came an old leopard which struggled with the dragon, which spit an hundred dragons out of its mouth; and the small dragons slew the great dragon and tare him in pieces. After this came an old man with two adders about his neck, and he sang on his harp an old song, how Joseph of Arimathie came into the land; and when the song was ended, he bade Sir Bors depart, for nought there remained for him to do. Then came again the dove with the golden censer, and stayed the storm which had been raging; and again the court was full of sweet odours, and four children were seen bearing fair tapers, and an old man in the midst held a censer in one hand and in the other a spear which was called the spear of vengeance.

Then said the old man to Bors, 'Go thou, and tell Sir Lancelot that because of his sins only is he hindered from seeing and doing the things which thou hast seen and done, for though in strength of arm none may be his match, yet in spiritual things there are many who are his betters.' And as he spake, four ladies in poor array passed into a gleaming chamber, where a bishop kneeled before a silver altar; and as he looked up, Sir Bors saw hanging over his head a silver sword whose brightness dazzled his eyes, and he heard a voice which said, 'Go hence, for as yet thou art not worthy to be in this place.'

On the morrow Sir Bors departed and went to Camelot, and told of the things which had happened to him in the house of King Pelles at Corbin, and it was noised abroad that Elaine was the mother of Sir Lancelot's child.

At this time King Arthur made a great feast, and to it came Elaine the Fair, and there she saw Queen Guenevere; but, though in countenance they made good cheer, neither rejoiced to see the other. But yet more grievous was the sorrow of Guenevere,

when Sir Lancelot was once again taken from her by inchantmen to the daughter of King Pelles; and so wroth was she that when she next set eyes on Lancelot, she bade him depart for a false and traitorous knight and never to see her more. But even as he heard these words, the strong man fell as smitten by a sword and when he woke from his swoon, he leaped out from the window and roamed as a madman in the woods, while twenty moons went round.

Bitter was the anger and strife between Elaine and Guenevere, when Sir Lancelot could nowhere be found. 'On thee lies the blame,' said Elaine, 'for thou hast already a lord as noble as any that may be found in the earth; and were it not for thee I should have the love of him who is the father of my child;' and having so said, she went her way, and King Arthur with a hundred knights brought her on her journey. But Guenevere tarried behind mourning, and Sir Bors saw her as the tears streamed down her cheeks. 'Fie on your weeping,' he said; 'thou weepest only when thy tears will not undo thy sin. Alas! that ever Sir Lancelot or his kin saw thee.' So said also Ector de Maris and Sir Lionel, and at their words Queen Guenevere fell down in a swoon; but presently waking up from it, she knelt before those knights and with clasped hands besought them to seek Lancelot through forest and brake, by mountain and river. But though twenty knights sought him in every quarter, yet they found him not; and strange were the fortunes of many who went on the quest of Sir Lancelot. Many a day and month passed by, and still the search went on, and the bravest of them sware never to see Arthur's court again until they should have found him. And even so it came to pass that Sir Percivale, as he journeyed on, met with Sir Ector, and neither knowing the other, they fought until both were sorely wounded; but when they knew each other they grieved, because they thought they were smitten to the death and that they should not achieve the quest of Sir Lancelot.

But even as they mourned and wept, the Holy Grail came by, bringing the savour of all spicery, and filling the chamber with dazzling light; and the pure Sir Percivale had a glimmering of that golden vessel, and his eyes could see dimly the fair maiden who bare it. Forthwith both were made whole; and they gave thanks to God, and went their way, marvelling at the strange things which had happened to them; and Percivale learnt from his comrade that in the golden vessel was a part of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which none but a perfect man might ever see.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FINDING OF LANCELOT.

MEANWHILE Sir Lancelot wandered through the forests in hunger and nakedness, doing strange deeds of wild strength, and seeking to harm those who would fain have been his friends. Thus he would have slain the kindly Sir Bliant, who brought him to the White Castle, and there tended him. But though his body gained back its health, his mind was as much astray as before. Still, though Lancelot knew not himself, he yet knew when two knights pressed hard upon Sir Bliant, and breaking his bonds, he rushed to his aid, and smote them down, so that they were glad to flee away. So he tarried still with Sir Bliant, and it came to pass, one day, that as he walked in the forest, he found a horse saddled, and tied to a tree, and against the tree a spear was leaning. Seizing the weapon in his hand, he leaped lightly on the saddle, and soon he saw before him a huge boar, which, as the knight rode up to him, tare the body of the horse with his tusks, and gashed the thigh of Sir Lancelot also. Then Lancelot put forth his strength and smote off the boar's head at a stroke; but the blood ran from his thigh in streams, and he was well-nigh faint, when a hermit looked on him with pity and brought others to help, who placed him in the cart with the boar's carcase, and bare him to the hermitage, where the hermit healed him of his wound. But though he gained strength of body under the good hermit's care, yet was his mind still astray, and so it came about that one day he fled from the hermitage and ran to Corbin, the city of the fair Elaine; and as he ran along the town to the castle, the people jibed and jeered at him; but in the castle they gave him food and shelter, for they thought as they looked upon him that they had never seen a man so goodly in form.

Not long after this, a nephew of King Pelles, named Castor, was made knight, and gave away gowns to many; and he sent a scarlet robe for Lancelot the Fool; and when the mad knight was arrayed in it, he seemed the goodliest man in all the court. Wearing the robe, Lancelot strayed into the garden, and, lying down by a well-side he fell asleep: and there some maidens saw him and ran and told the fair Elaine. Then Elaine came hastily, and when she looked on him she knew the man who was the father of her child; and she took counsel with King Pelles, and by his good-will the knight was borne into the chamber of a

tower in which lay the Sangreal, and by the virtue of that holy vessel he was healed of all his sickness.

When Sir Lancelot awoke and saw King Pelles with his daughter standing near, he was sore ashamed, and besought them to tell him how he had come thither; and Elaine told him all the story, how he had been kept as a fool and how he had been made sound again. 'Let no man know it,' said Sir Lancelot, 'for I am banished from King Arthur's court for ever.' Then after a fortnight he said to Elaine, 'What travel, care, and anguish I have had for thee, thou knowest well. Wilt thou then now for thy love go to thy father, and get of him a place where I may dwell?' 'Yea,' answered Elaine, 'I will live and die with thee, and only for thy sake, and sure am I that there is nothing which my father will not give at my asking; and wherever thou art, there, doubt not, I will be also.' So at her prayer King Pelles gave him as his abode the Castle of Bliant; but before they departed thither, Sir Castor asked him his name, and Lancelot said, 'I am the knight Ill-doer.' 'Nay,' said Castor, 'thou seemest to me rather to be Sir Lancelot du Lake.' 'Sir,' answered Lancelot, 'you are no gentle knight: for were I Lancelot, and it pleased me to withhold my name, why should it grieve you to keep my counsel, so you be not hurt thereby?' Then Castor kneeled down and craved his pardon: and Lancelot said, 'It is easily given;' and so they went their way to the Castle of Bliant, which stood on a fair island girt with iron, with fair waters all round it; and Lancelot called it the Joyous Isle; but for all its joy Lancelot's heart well-nigh burst with sorrow as each day he turned his eyes towards the land of Arthur and Guenevere. Yet for all his grief he was conqueror over all the knights who came to joust with him in the Joyous Isle; and at last came Sir Percivale of Wales with his friend Sir Ector, and he called to a maiden who stood on the shore of the island with a sparrowhawk on her arm, and asked her who was in the castle. Then said the maiden, 'We have here the mightiest knight and the fairest maiden in all the world.' 'What is his name?' asked Sir Percivale. 'He calls himself the knight that hath trespassed.' 'And how came he thither?' said Percivale. 'Truly,' she said, 'he came as a madman into the city of Corbin, and there he was healed by the Holy Grail.' Then went Percivale to the castle gate and bade the porter tell his lord that a knight had come who would joust with him; and straightway Lancelot hastened into the lists. Fierce was the fight and long: and when their breath was well-nigh spent, Sir Percivale bade Lancelot tell him his name. 'I am the Ill-doing

Knight,' he said; 'and who art thou?' 'My name,' he answered, 'is Percivale of Wales.' 'Alas!' said Lancelot, 'that I should have fought with one of my fellows;' and so saying he flung away his shield and his sword; and Percivale, marvelling much, charged him strictly to tell him his true name. Then he said, 'I am Lancelot du Lake, King Ban's son of Benwick.' 'Ah me!' said Percivale, 'what have I done. Thee was I sent to seek, and two years long have I sought thee wearily; and on yonder bank stands thy brother Sir Ector.' And when Sir Lancelot had a sight of him, he ran to him and took him in his arms, and long time they wept over each other for joy; and Elaine told all the story, how Lancelot had come to Corbin and to the Joyous Isle.

So the days went on; and after a while Sir Percivale asked Lancelot whether he would journey with them to Arthur's court. 'Nay,' he answered, 'it may not be.' Then his brother besought him, telling him of the grievous sorrow of the king and the queen, and how all longed to see again the knight who was more spoken of than any other knight then living, and that never any could be more welcome at the court than he. 'Well,' said Lancelot, 'I will go with you,' and they made ready for the journey; and with a sad heart the fair Elaine saw the man depart to whom she had given her love.

Great was the joy at Camelot when Lancelot once more stood among his fellows of the Round Table; and as the queen listened to the tale of all that had befallen him, she wept as though she would have died. Then said the king, 'Truly, I marvel, Sir Lancelot, why ye went out of your mind. There be many who deem it was for the love of fair Elaine, King Pelles' daughter.' 'My lord,' answered Lancelot, 'if I have done any folly, I have had my reward:' and the king said no more; but all Sir Lancelot's kinsfolk knew for whom he went out of his mind.

Then was it published abroad that on the feast of Pentecost next coming there should be a great tourney. To Camelot therefore Tristram took his journey at the prayer of the fair Isolte, but because she would not go with him to add to his labour, he went forth alone and unarmed. On the way he came upon two knights, of whom the one had smitten the other, and the knight who had done this was Palamides. Then as Tristram stood before him, Palamides said, 'The time is come for dressing our old sores. Thou art unarmed. Put thou on this knight's harness, for our quarrel shall be this day fought out.' And it was fought fiercely and long; but for all his striving Palamides could not master Tristram, and at the last he said, 'It may be that my

offence against you is not so great but that we may be friends. Let us then bring the strife to an end: for all that I have offended is and was for the love of the fair Isolte; and against her I have done no wrong.' 'Yea,' said Tristram, 'God pardon thee as I forgive thee.' So they rode to Carlisle together, and when Sir Palamides the Saracen had been made a Christian by the bishop, they journeyed on thence to be at Arthur's court by Pentecost.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SHRIVING OF SIR LANCELOT.

WHEN the vigil of the feast was come, there entered the great hall of Camelot a maiden who knelt before the king and prayed him to say where Sir Lancelot might be. 'Yonder he is,' answered the king. Then said the maiden to Lancelot, 'I bring thee greetings from King Pelles, and I charge thee to come with me.' 'What would ye have with me?' asked Lancelot. 'That thou shalt know,' she said, 'when we have reached our journey's end.' Then came the queen and said. 'Wilt thou leave us now?' 'Madam,' answered the damsel, 'he shall be with you again on the morrow.'

Then riding with the maiden, Sir Lancelot came to an abbey of nuns, and being led into the abbess's chamber he saw there Sir Bors and Sir Lionel; and presently twelve nuns brought in Galahad and prayed Lancelot to make him a knight, for at no worthier hands might he receive the order. And when Lancelot knew that the desire came from the youth himself, he said, 'To-morrow morn I will make thee a knight:' and so on the morn at prime it was done; and Lancelot said, 'God make thee a good man; for one that is fairer in form no man may ever see. And now wilt thou come with me to King Arthur's court?' 'Nay,' he said, 'not now.' So Lancelot went on his way with Bors and Lionel to Camelot; and there when all were gathered together, they saw in the Perilous Seat words newly written in letters of gold, which said, 'When four hundred winters and fifty-four have been accomplished since the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ this seat shall be filled.' 'Then,' said Lancelot, 'it should be filled this day, for this is the feast of Pentecost, and further four hundred years and fifty-four; and if it please you, I would that

none may see these letters until he be come for whom this seat has been made ready.' So over them they placed a cloth of silk: and presently a squire came in, who told them of a great stone floating down the river, and of a great sword which was stuck in the stone. 'I will see this marvel,' said the king: and when they came to the river, they beheld the red marble stone and the jewelled sword, round the pommel of which the words were written, 'Never shall man take me hence but he by whose side I ought to hang, and he shall be the best knight of the world.' Then said Arthur to Lancelot, 'That art thou, and so the sword is thine.' 'Nay,' answered Lancelot soberly, 'I ween not that I am the best knight; and he who seeks to take that sword and fails shall receive from it a wound that he shall not long after remain whole.'

Then the king turned to Sir Gawaine and said, 'Make trial of the sword, I pray you, for my love:' but Sir Gawaine would not until the king charged him on his obedience. Yet though he took up the sword by the handle, he could not stir it. Then the king thanked him, but Lancelot said, 'So sorely shall this sword touch you that you shall wish you had never touched it for the best castle in the realm.' Turning then to Percivale, the king asked if he would try the sword, and Percivale said, 'Yes, gladly, to bear Gawaine fellowship,' but neither could he stir it.

When after this they sat down to the feast, and all the seats were filled except the Perilous Siege, on a sudden all the doors and windows of the place were shut of themselves, and into the darkened hall came, none knew whence, an old man clad all in white, leading a young knight who had neither sword nor shield, but only a scabbard hanging by his side. And the old man stood before the king and said, 'I bring you here one who is of kin to Joseph of Arimathie, and who shall achieve the marvels of this court and of strange realms.' Then said he to the youth, 'Follow me,' and leading him to the Perilous Seat, he lifted up the silken cloth and found beneath it the words written, 'This is the seat of Galahad the High Prince.' Then the old man placed the youth in that seat, and departed. And all the knights of the Round Table marvelled that one who was a child durst sit in the Perilous Seat: and Sir Lancelot looking earnestly at the youth, saw that he was his own son, and his heart was filled with joy. Then were these tidings brought to Queen Guenevere, and she said, 'I may well suppose he is the son of Sir Lancelot and King Pelles' daughter.' And the king went to Galahad and bade him welcome, for he should move many good knights to the quest of

the Sangreal, and should bring to an end things which none other knight had ever been able to achieve. So having said, the king led Galahad to the stone in the river, and the queen went with them. And Galahad said in few words, 'For the surety of this sword I brought none with me, and here by my side hangs the scabbard.' Then laying his hand on the sword, he drew it lightly from the stone, and as he put it in his sheath, he said, 'Now have I the sword which was sometime the sword of the good knight Balin, who with it slew his brother Balan, because of the grievous stroke which Balan gave to my grandsire King Pelles, and which is not yet whole, nor shall be till I heal him.' And even as he spake, they saw a maiden riding toward them on a white palfrey, and when she came up to them, she called to Sir Lancelot and said that he had lost his ancient name. 'How so?' asked the knight. 'This morning,' she answered, 'thou wast the best man living: and now there is one better than thou.' 'Nay,' said Lancelot, 'I know well I was never the best.' 'Yes,' answered the maiden, 'that were ye, and of all sinful men on the earth thou art so still.'

That day said King Arthur to his knights of the Round Table, 'Ye will all depart, I know, to this search for the Holy Grail, and never shall I see you all together again: therefore will I now see you all in the meadow of Camelot, that, when ye are dead, men may say the good knights were all together on such a day.' So were they gathered on the field of Camelot, and among all the knights the goodliest and the mightiest was Galahad. After the jousting the king made him unlace his helm that the queen might see his face: and Guenevere said, 'Well may men say that he is Lancelot's son, for never were two men more like.'

In the evening, when they had prayed in the great minster, and as the knights sat each in his own place, they heard cracking of thunder as though the hall would be riven through: and in the midst of the crashing and darkness a light entered, clearer by seven times than ever they saw day, and all were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost: and as each knight looked on his fellows, behold all were fairer than any on whom their eyes had ever rested yet. But all sate dumb, and in the still silence came the Holy Grail, covered with white samite, but none might see it, or the hand which bare it; and with it came all sweet odours, and each knight had such food and drink as he loved best in the world; and then the holy vessel was borne away, they knew not whither. Then were their tongues loosed, and the king gave thanks for that which they had seen. But Sir Gawaine said,

We have had this day all that our hearts would wish, but we might not see the Holy Grail, so heedfully was it covered: and therefore now I vow with the morrow's morn to depart hence in quest of the holy vessel and never to return until I have seen it more openly; and if I may not achieve this, I shall come back as one that may not win against the will of God.' So vowed also the most part among the knights of the Round Table.

Then was the king stricken with sorrow. 'Thou hast well nigh slain me,' he said, 'with thy vow; for thou hast reft me of the fairest fellowship and the truest knighthood that ever were seen together in any realm of the world. I have loved them as well as my life; and well I know that, when we are sundered, we shall never more meet all together on this earth again.' 'Comfort yourself,' said Lancelot. 'It shall be to us a greater honour than if we die in any other place; and die we must.' 'Ah, Lancelot,' said Arthur, 'it is my love for you all which makes me speak thus; for never had Christian king so many worthy knights around him.' But greater still was the grief of Queen Guenevere; and many of the ladies would have gone with the knights whom they loved: but an old knight came among them saying, that the knights must go forth alone, or else they would never achieve the task.

On the morrow, when the service was done in the great minster, the king took account of the number of the knights who had vowed to search for the Holy Grail; and they were one hundred and fifty, all knights of the Round Table. But Guenevere was in her chamber: and thither went Lancelot to take his leave, and then they rode all through the streets of Camelot, rich and poor weeping as they went.

Thus far Sir Galahad was without a shield; but on the fourth day he came to a white abbey, where, in a chamber, he found two knights of the Round Table, King Bagdemagus and Sir Uwaine; and when he asked them why they were there, they told him how they had heard that in that place was a shield which no man might wear except to his grievous hurt; but Bagdemagus said that nevertheless he would seek to bear it away. On the morrow a monk warned him not to touch it unless he were the best man in the world; 'That I ween I am not,' said Bagdemagus, 'yet will I make trial.' So he bore it away, and a knight met him and smote him and took away the shield, and bade the squire of King Bagdemagus carry it to Sir Galahad, to whom the shield belonged. So Galahad won his shield, and Bagdemagus escaped hard with his life. Now Sir Uwaine would fain have gone with

Galahad, but Galahad would take only the squire who brought him the shield that had been made long ago for good King Evelake, and which had won him the victory against the paynim Tolleme and his people. And the squire's name was Melias, the son of the King of Denmark; and Galahad made him a knight.

Many days they rode together, until at length they came to a place where the roads forked, and on the cross which was there set up they saw letters written which said, 'He who goes to the right hand shall not go out of that way again, if he be a good man and a worthy knight: and he who goes on the left, shall have his strength soon tried.' Then Melias besought Sir Galahad to let him take the left path, and after a while Galahad suffered him to go. So on rode Melias, and passing through a forest, came to a fair meadow, in which was a lodge of boughs, and in that lodge a chair, and on the chair a golden crown, while on the earth were spread rich cloths and on these were rich and rare dainties. For these Melias cared not; but taking up the crown he rode onwards. Full soon, however, he heard a voice behind him, which bade him set down the crown which was not his, and defend himself. Short was the battle, for the knight who had overtaken Melias smote him with his spear, and taking away the crown left him well nigh dead. In this plight Sir Galahad found him, and when he had smitten the knight who had wounded him, and yet another knight who came forth against him, he took up Melias and bare him to an abbey, where an old monk said that within the term of seven weeks he would heal him. Then Galahad told the monk how they two were in quest of the Holy Grail; and the old man said, 'For this has he been thus wounded; and strange is it that any durst take on himself the order of knighthood without clean confession. For the right-hand way was the way of the good man, the other the way of sinners. Pride it was which took this knight away from Galahad, and the taking of the crown was a sin of covetousness and theft; and the two knights whom Galahad smote were the two deadly sins which had conquered the knight Sir Melias.' Then said Galahad, 'Now I go my way, and God keep you all;' and Melias answered, 'As soon as I can ride again, I will seek you.' So Galahad went on his journey, and came to a castle which was called the Castle of the Maidens, because seven knights had seized it, and sworn that never lady nor knight should pass there, but they should be shut up within it, and many maidens had they thus devoured. These Galahad rescued, and the seven knights were slain by Sir Gawaine

and Gareth and Uwaine, who were riding together in search of Galahad.

But again the pure knight had gone on his way from the Maidens' Castle, and Lancelot and Percivale met him. But they knew him not, for he was in new disguise, and they ran on him with their lances. With two stout blows Galahad smote them down and passed on, while a recluse, who dwelt hard by, cried aloud, 'God be with thee, thou best knight of the world.' Then knew Lancelot and Percivale that it was Galahad: but though they hastened after him, yet they could not find him; and Lancelot, riding on, came to an old chapel, within which he found an altar arrayed in silken cloths, and a silver candlestick which bare six great candles. But there was no place by which he could enter; and unlacing his helm, he ungirded his sword and lay down upon his shield to sleep before the stony cross which stood hard by. Presently, half-asleep and half-awake, he saw two white palfreys bearing a sick knight on a litter, and as they stood before the cross, the knight prayed to God that his sorrow might leave him, since he had endured long for little trespass. Then the candlestick with the six tapers came before the cross, but Lancelot saw not the hand that bare it, and with it came the silver table, and the vessel of the Sangreal which he had seen in the house of King Pescheur. Straightway then the knight went on hands and knees until he touched the holy vessel and kissed it, and was healed of the sickness, and the vessel and the silver table vanished away. Then the sick knight's squire asked him how he did, and he said, 'Right well, I thank God; through the holy vessel I am healed; but strange to me it seems that this knight had no power to awake when the holy vessel was brought hither.' 'Doubtless,' said the squire, 'he is in some deadly sin: but here I have brought all your arms save helm and sword, and by my counsel thou wilt take the sword and helm of this knight.' And even so that knight did, and he took Lancelot's horse also.

When Lancelot waked, he doubted whither that which he had seen were dreams or not, and he heard a voice which said, 'Harder than the stone, more bitter than the wood, barer than the fig-tree's leaf, go thou from this holy place.' So heavy and grievous was Sir Lancelot when these words fell on his ears, that he wept sore and cursed the day on which he was born. 'My sin has brought me into great dishonour,' he said. 'So long as I sought earthly fame, all things went well with me, and never was I discomfited in my quarrel; but now, when I am in quest of holy things, my old sin so shames me that no power to stir

remained within me when the Sangreal appeared before me.' So he mourned till the day broke, and he heard the birds sing, and their song brought him some comfort. But missing his horse and harness, he went sorrowing to a high hill where was a hermitage, and then he made confession to the hermit, how for many a long year he had loved a queen beyond measure, and how all his great and good deeds had been done for her sake, or to win himself worship to cause him to be the better beloved, and not for the sake of God only. Then said the hermit, 'I will counsel you if you will promise to me not to come in that queen's fellowship, as much as ye may forbear;' and Lancelot made the promise. 'See that your heart and your mouth accord,' said the hermit, 'and you shall have more worship that ever before.' Then Lancelot told him of the strange words which he had heard; and the hermit said, 'Marvel not, for God loves you well. The voice called thee harder than stone, for thou wouldest not leave thy sin for any goodness that God sent to thee, and wouldest not be softened neither by water nor by fire. But take good heed. In all the world, no knight hath received the grace that thou hast. God hath given thee fairness and wit, prowess and hardiness, and now, whether thou wilt or wilt not, He will suffer thee to go no longer alone, but He will have thee know Him. More bitter wast thou called than wood, because thou hast in thee the bitterness of sin; and barer art thou of fruit in good thought and good will than the fig-tree which was cursed because leaves only were found thereon.'

So, when Lancelot had confessed his sin and sought for mercy, the hermit assoiled him and prayed him to tarry with him that day.' 'That will I gladly,' said the knight, 'for I have neither helm, horse, nor sword.' 'On the morn,' said the hermit, 'I will bring to you all that belongs to yon.'

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TEMPTATION OF SIR PERCIVALE.

AND now the faith of the good Sir Percivale was to be tried. For a little while he tarried with the recluse who greeted Sir Galahad as the best knight of the world, and when Percivale told her his name she rejoiced greatly, for she was his mother's sister; and they talked together of many things, and she told him how

Merlin had made the Round Table in token of the roundness of the world, and how they who are made its fellows forsake all other for the sake of that fellowship. 'So,' she said, 'has it been with thee, for since thou wast admitted to that company, thou hast not seen thy mother, and now her days are ended on earth. But go thy way to the Castle of Carbonek, and there shalt thou get tidings of the good knight Galahad whom thou seekest.'

So Percivale departed and came to a monastery where on the morn he heard mass, and nigh the altar, on a bed covered with cloth of silk and gold, he saw one lie with a crown of gold on his head. But when it came to the sacring, the man rose up and uncovered his head, and Percivale saw that his body was full of great wounds on the shoulders, arms, and face, and when he asked who he might be, one of the monks said, 'This is King Evelake whom Joseph of Arimathie made a Christian, and thereafter he sought to be with the Sangreal, which he followed till he was struck almost blind, and Evelake prayed that he might not die till he should have seen the good knight of his blood, of the ninth degree, who should win that holy vessel; and when he had thus prayed, a voice was heard saying, 'Thou shalt not die till he have kissed thee; and when he shall come, thine eyes shall be clear again, and thy wounds shall be healed.'

As Percivale journeyed on from the abbey, he met twenty men of arms bearing a dead knight; and when they learnt that he was come from Arthur's court, they cried, 'Slay him;' and though Sir Percivale fought stoutly, slain he would have been, had not Sir Galahad appeared on a sudden and smitten down a man at every blow, until those fled who remained alive, and Galahad departed after them. But Percivale could not keep him in sight for he had no horse; and at last being wearied, he fell asleep, and waking saw a woman standing by, who said that if he would promise to do her will she would bring him a horse. This he promised, and straightway she brought him a coal-black steed; and on its back he rode four days till he came to a great water into which the steed would have plunged: but Percivale feared whether he could overpass it, and he made the sign of the cross on his forehead. Then with a mighty leap the horse went into the water, which seemed to be set on fire, and Percivale knew that he had been set free from a demon, and he spent the night praying and thanking God. Then going on into a valley, he saw a serpent bearing a lion's cub by the neck, and a great lion went behind it roaring. Presently there was a battle between the lion and the serpent, and Percivale took part with the kindlier beast

and smote the serpent with a deadly wound, and the lion in great joy fawned on the knight, who stroked him on the neck and shoulders. All that night the lion slept by the side of Sir Percivale who dreamed that two ladies came by, the younger on a lion, the elder on a serpent; and the younger bidding him be ready on the morrow at her lord's command to fight with the strongest champion in the world, vanished away, and then the other complained that he had done her wrong by slaying her serpent when it fought with the lion. 'Why didst thou wound it?' she asked, and Percivale said, 'Because I fought for the kindlier beast.' Then she said that he must make amends for his murder by becoming her man. 'That will I not,' he said. 'Be it so,' she answered, 'then will I seize thee if I can find thee at any time unguarded:' and she too vanished away, and Percivale's dream was ended. On the morn he rose up weak and feeble, and going to the seashore he saw coming towards him a ship, at whose head stood an old man in priestly garb, and when Percivale asked him who he was, he said, 'I am of a strange country, and hither I come to comfort you.' Then Percivale told him of his dream and prayed him to expound it; and the priest said, 'She who rode on the lion is the new law of the holy Church, and she came to warn thee of the great battle that shall befall thee: and she on the serpent is the old law, and the serpent is the fiend,—and when she asked thee to become her man, it was that she might tempt thee to renounce thy baptism.'

There Percivale abode till midday with the lion; and at noon a ship came toward him, bearing a beautiful maiden clad as a queen, and she besought the knight to help her to win back her inheritance, 'For,' she said, 'I dwelt with the greatest man of the world, and I had more pride of my beauty than I ought, and I said some words that pleased him not; so he drave me away from my heritage without pity for me or for my court. If then thou art of the Round Table, it is thy part to help those who are in trouble.' So Percivale promised, and she thanked him: but the sun was hot, and she bade one of the women set up a pavilion under which the knight might sleep, and before him she placed costly food and wine, and with the wine Sir Percivale deemed he was somewhat more heated than he ought to be. As he gazed on the lady, she seemed now to grow fairer and fairer, until he proffered her his love; but she said him nay, unless he would swear never to do henceforth anything but that which she might command him. So Percivale sware the oath, but as he drew near to her, he spied his sword which lay on the ground, with the red

cross in its pommel, and remembering his knighthood and the words of the good priest, he made the sign of the cross on his forehead, and straightway the pavilion changed into smoke and a black cloud, and on the sea he saw the vessel bearing away the lady who wept and wailed, and it seemed that all the water burnt after her.

And Sir Percivale too wept and mourned for his wickedness; but presently came again the ship which he had seen the day before, and in it came again the good priest, who asked him how he had fared, and Percivale told him all. 'Did'st thou not know the maiden?' the old man asked him; and he said, 'Nay, but I know now that the fiend sent her to shame me.' 'O, good knight,' answered the priest, 'thou art a fool, for that maiden was the master fiend himself who was beaten out of heaven for his sin, and who would have conquered thee but for the grace of God. Wherefore take good heed.' So saying, the old man vanished away, and Percivale went into the ship, which bare him thence.

CHAPTER XV.

THE VISION OF SIR LANCELOT.

After three days the hermit with whom Sir Lancelot tarried gave him a horse, a helm, and a sword; and departing at noontide the knight journeyed on, until he came to a chapel where was an old man to whom he told his quest of the Holy Grail. 'Seek it ye may,' said the man, 'but there is sin on thee, and while it be there, thou shalt never see it.' Then Lancelot asked what he should do; and the old man charged him to eat no flesh and to drink no wine and to hear mass daily so long as he might search for the holy vessel. Then riding onward, he came to an old cross, as the darkness was closing in: and putting his horse to feed, he kneeled down and prayed, and then lay down to sleep. Presently in a dream he saw a man compassed with stars and with a golden crown on his head, and behind him came seven kings and two knights, and all these worshipped at the cross, holding up their hands towards heaven. Then the clouds opened and an old man came down with a company of angels, and gave unto each his blessing and called them true knights and good servants; but to one of the two knights he said, 'I have lost all that I have set in

thee; for thou hast fought and warred for the pleasure of the world more than to please me; and therefore thou shalt be brought to nought, if thou yield me not my treasure.'

On the morrow Sir Lancelot rode on, pondering much the vision which he had seen. Soon he met the knight who had taken away from him his horse, his helm, and his sword; and doing battle with him, he got them back again, and left him the horse on which he rode. Going on till nightfall, he came to the abode of a hermit to whom he told his dream and asked its meaning; and the hermit said, 'The seven kings are thy forefathers, of whom the seventh is thy father King Ban: the two knights are thyself and thy son Galahad, and of thee it was said that God will not love thee if thou yield Him not up His treasure, for little thank hast thou given to God for all the virtues God hath lent thee.' Then said Lancelot, 'The good knight whom thou callest my son should pray for me that I fall not into sin again.' 'Be sure,' said the hermit, 'that thou dost fare the better for his prayers; but the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father nor the father bear the iniquity of his son.'

The next day Lancelot riding onwards came to a castle where knights clad in black armour and on black horses were being worsted by knights clad in white armour and on white horses; and Lancelot thought to increase his worship by striking in with the weaker party. Doughty as ever were his blows: but mortal man must tire at last, and Sir Lancelot at length was borne down, faint with loss of blood. 'Ah me,' he said, 'when I fought to win prowess for myself, never man had the better of me; now when I strive to aid others, I am myself overcome.'

So being left all alone he fell asleep; and there came before him in a vision an old man who said, 'Lancelot, Lancelot, why is thy mind turned lightly towards its deadly sin?' and then he vanished away. Much musing on these words, Lancelot when he woke rode on until he came to the dwelling of a recluse to whom he told all that he had seen and what had befallen him, and she said, 'The black and the white knights were the earthly knights and the spiritual knights; and thou, seeing the sinners overcome thoughtest to win glory for thyself by hastening to their aid; but the white knights saw the Sangreal which thine eyes may not see, and so gained strength for their arms, greater than the strength even of thy arm, though thou hast not thy peer among earthly sinful men.'

Then the recluse commended Lancelot to God, and he rode on till he came to a gloomy river, over which his horse bore him

safely; but when he was on the other side, there came a black knight, who slew Lancelot's horse and vanished away. And Lancelot took his helm and shield, and went on his way humbly.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TRIAL OF SIR BORS.

THERE was aching of heart not for Lancelot only. For to many a knight of the Round Table the months rolled wearily on while they sought in vain for the Sangreal. So was it with Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector de Maris, and much they complained each to the other of the weariness of their quest. At length, as they rode one day together they came to an old chapel, into which they went to pray, and after they had prayed they fell asleep: and in his dream Gawaine saw a hundred and fifty bulls, all black save three, which were white, but of these three one had a black spot; and these three were tied with strong cords; and the other bulls went off to seek better pasture, and some came back again so lean and weak that scarcely might they stand. But to Ector, as he slept, it seemed that he was riding with Lancelot his brother in quest of that which they should not find; and another came who took Lancelot off his horse and placed him on an ass, upon which he rode till he came to a fair well, but when Lancelot stooped down to drink of it, the water sank from him, and when he saw this he rose up and departed by the way by which he had come.

When they awoke they told each his dream; and even as they spake, a hand bare to the elbow, covered with red samite, and holding a clear burning candle, came into the chapel and again vanished away, and they heard a voice which said, 'Knights of evil faith and poor belief may not come to the adventures of the Holy Grail.'

Then departing from the chapel, the two knights went on; and upon the road they met with a knight who would joust with Sir Gawaine. And when they had fought awhile, Gawaine smote him harder than he had weened, and the knight prayed Gawaine to take him to some abbey that he might make confession before he died. 'What is thy name?' said Gawaine. I am Uwaine les Avoutres,' he answered, 'the son of King Uriens.' 'Alas!' said Gawaine, 'that I should slay one of my fellows of the Round

Table.' Yet so must it be, for when the spear-head was drawn from the wound, Uwaine died.

In sadness and sorrow Ector and Gawaine rode on to the abode of the hermit Nacien, to whom they told their dreams and all that had befallen them; and the hermit told them the meaning of their visions. To Gawaine he said, 'The fair meadow is humility and patience—things ever fresh and green. The black bulls are the company of the Round Table—knights black with sins, save three, who are Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, and Sir Bors; but the spot of one sin mars the pure whiteness in Sir Bors. The going away of the black bulls was the departure of the knights on the quest of the Sangreal without confession, and so they came back into waste countries, where many of them shall die.' And to Ector he said, 'The thing which ye shall not find is the Sangreal: but the placing of Lancelot on the ass is the humbling of the knight, and the water which sank away from him is the grace of God, in desire of which he went back by the way by which he had come.'

Great also were the griefs and sufferings of Sir Bors, when he had departed from Camelot in search of the holy vessel. As in one place he looked up to the branches of the trees over his head, he saw a great bird on an old and dry stem smiting itself that its blood might feed its young birds which were dead of hunger; and the great bird died, but the young birds lived again and were strong. Then going on, he came to a castle where the lady lodged him richly; but while he was there, there came a messenger from another woman her enemy who said to the lady of the castle, that if she found not a knight to fight in her behalf she should be driven forth and despoiled of all her goods and lands. So Bors fought and conquered in her quarrel, but he refused all recompense which the lady would have bestowed on him.

As he journeyed thence, he met first two knights who were leading his brother Lionel bound and stripped, and scourging him with thorns: but before he could rush to rescue him, there came another knight who was striving to force a maiden into the lonely parts of the forest, and the maiden besought him to deliver her out of his hand; and for a moment Bors knew not what to do: but the cries of the maiden pierced his heart, and he fought with and smote the man who was doing her wrong. But when he had placed her in safety, he went onwards to seek his brother Lionel; and there met him a man clad in dark raiment and riding on a black horse who asked him what he sought; and he said, 'I seek my brother whom two knights were beating as they drove him on

the road.' 'It boots not to seek him,' said the man, 'for he is dead, and here is his body:' and it seemed to Bors that the body which he showed him was the body of Lionel. So he took it up, and placing it on his saddle bow, he brought it to an old chapel, where they placed it in a tomb of marble. 'Now leave him here,' said the other to Bors, 'and to-morrow we will come back to do him service.' 'Art thou a priest?' asked Bors: and when he said 'Yea,' Bors told him of a dream which he had, and which showed him two birds, one white as a swan, and the other swart as a raven, and each bird in its turn promised him riches and wealth if he would tend and serve it; and how again he had dreamed and had seen, as he thought, two flowers, like lilies, and the one would have taken the other's whiteness but one came and parted them that they might not touch each other, and then out of every flower came forth many flowers and fruit in plenty. Then the priest told Bors that the white bird was a lady that loved him truly, and would die if he refused her his love; he said too that, if Bors said nay to her, Sir Lancelot also should die, and so he should be the slayer of his brother Lionel and of Lancelot du Lake, whereas he had gone about to rescue a maiden who pertained not at all to him. Then he led Bors to a high tower, where knights and ladies welcomed and unarmed him, and made him such cheer that he forgot all his sorrow and anguish and took no more thought for his brother or for Lancelot; and as he thus lay feasting, there came a lady fairer than all who were around him, and more richly arrayed than even Queen Guenevere: then said they, 'This is the lady whom we serve, and she it is who loves you and will have no other knight but you.' Then, as they talked together, the lady straightly asked him for his love, until Bors was sore vexed and said, 'There is none in the world to whom I may grant it, for my brother is lying dead whom evil men have slain.' And when she saw that she asked in vain, she said that she would die, and her maidens followed her to the battlements. Still he heard their cry, and moved with pity he made the sign of the cross; and there was a great crash as if an army of fiends were about, and tower and chapel, priest and maidens, all vanished away.

Thankful and glad was Sir Bors for his rescuing, as he rode on to an abbey, where he told the abbot of his vision of the great bird feeding her young. Then said the abbot, that the love of the great bird was the love of Jesus Christ, for the blood that the great fowl bled brought back the young from death to life, and the bad tree was the world which of itself can have no fruit. 'But all that came after,' said the abbot, 'was to lead thee into

error, and the fiend who spake with thee in guise of a priest lied to thee about thy brother Lionel, for he is still alive; and here is the dream of the dry tree and the white lilies. The dry tree is thy brother, who is without virtue and a murderer; and the flowers are the knight and the maiden whom he sought to injure, and hadst thou left these first to help thy brother, thou wouldst have gone to the succour of a rotten tree.'

Then, parting from the abbot, Sir Bors went his way and came to a castle where they told him of a great tournament presently to be held there, and he thought to be there himself if he might have the fellowship of his brother or of some other knights of the Round Table. So thinking, he wandered to a hermitage in the forest, and there at the chapel door he found Sir Lionel all armed, and Bors went up to embrace him for joy and gladness. But his brother cried out as he drew near, 'Nay, come not nigh me, you left me to be scourged and slain, and for that misdeed thou shalt die.' In vain Sir Bors sought to soften him and win forgiveness. 'Forgive thee will I never; and if I get the upper hand, thou diest.' So madly raged Lionel that Bors wist not what to do, for it seemed shame to him and grief to fight with his brother: and when Lionel saw that Bors would not fight, he rode upon him, and then lighting off his horse took him by the helmet and would have smitten off his head, when the hermit came and strove to stay him for very shame. But Sir Lionel turned savagely and slew the good old man, and again was about to smite Sir Bors, when a knight of the Round Table rode up hastily, and seizing Lionel by the shoulders said, 'Wilt thou slay thy brother, the worthiest knight in the world?' 'Nay, if thou seek to hinder me,' said Lionel, 'I will slay thee first and him afterwards.' At these words the knight, whose name was Colgrevance, made ready for the fight; and as they strove together, the heart of Sir Bors well nigh burst with grief and shame. But at the last the good Sir Colgrevance was slain, and Lionel rushed once more to kill his brother. The meekness of Bors and his patience were sorely tried, and he was just lifting up his hand to defend his life, when he heard a voice which said, 'Flee, and touch him not;' and there came between them a flaming cloud, so that both their shields were kindled by it. And again the voice said, 'Bear thy brother fellowship no more, but go thou to the sea where Sir Percivale awaits thee.' So, going to the shore, he found a vessel into which he stepped, and the boat straightway shot through the waters, so that it seemed to him to be flying. Onwards it sped, until the darkness closed around it, and Sir

Bors sank to sleep. But when he awoke in the morning, he saw a knight lying in the midst of the vessel, whom he knew to be Percivale. But Percivale was abashed until Sir Bors unlaced his helm and showed his face. Then great was the joy between them, and Percivale said, 'We lack nothing but Galahad the good knight.'

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ACHIEVING OF THE SANGREAL.

WHILE these things were happening, Sir Galahad was doing great deeds elsewhere. First, after he had rescued Percivale from the twenty knights, he came to a castle where a tournament was going on, and where Gawaine and Ector were fighting with the men without and bearing down the men within; and Sir Galahad, striking in with the weaker, dealt a blow on Gawaine which smote him to the ground. Then, having beaten back all the knights without, Galahad stole away unseen; and Gawaine said, 'Now are Lancelot's words proved true, that the sword which was stuck in the stone should give me a buffet such as I would not have for the best castle in the world, for never before had I such a stroke from any man's hand.' 'Your quest is done, it seems,' said Ector. 'Yea,' he said, 'I shall seek no more.'

But Galahad rode on towards the Castle of Carbonek, and he was benighted at a hermitage. As he rested with the hermit there came a maiden who bade him follow her, and she led him to a great castle where the lady suffered him to rest but for a little while, and then, leading him by torchlight to the sea, brought him to the ship in which were Bors and Percivale; and right glad were they to greet Sir Galahad. Then, as the good knight stepped into the boat, the winds bore it away swiftly over the sea, till it brought them to a narrow way betwixt high rocks where they might not land; but they saw another ship and upon it they might go without danger; and to it they went by the maiden's bidding, and they found the vessel richly dight, but there was neither man nor woman therein. But in the end of the ship these words were written, 'Beware, thou who enterest this ship, that thou be stedfast in trust, for I am Faith, and if thou failest I shall not help thee.' Then said the maiden to Percivale, 'Knowest thou who I am?' and he answered, 'Nay.'

'Know then,' she said, 'that I am thy sister, the daughter of King Pellinore; and now I pray thee enter not into this ship if thou be not firm of faith, for it will suffer no sin.' Then answered Percivale, 'I shall adventure it, and if I be an untrue knight I shall perish.'

Then the maiden showed them all the treasures of the ship, the sword which King Pelles drew to his grievous hurt (for never since that day had the wound been healed with which he then was smitten), and the rich bed which Solomon's wife had caused to be made, and the three spindles made from the tree which Eve planted. Then taking the sword, she said to Galahad, 'Gird thou on this sword which hath been so long desired of all good knights;' and when she had fastened it round him with a girdle made in most part of her own hair which she had loved well in her youth, she said, 'Now I reck not though I die, for I am one of the most blessed of maidens, since I have made the worthiest knight in all the world.'

Then again the wind drove them on to the Castle of Carteloise, which was held by evil knights who had wronged their sister and put their father in prison and done great harm through all the land. These knights Sir Galahad slew, and rescued the old man from his dungeon; but there was little life now left in him, and he departed thanking God who suffered him to die in the arms of the good Sir Galahad.

And again they went on to another castle, from which came a band of knights who told them of the custom of the place, that every maiden who passed by must yield a dish full of her blood. 'That shall she not do,' said Galahad, 'while I live;' and fierce was the struggle that followed, and the sword of Galahad, which was the sword of King David, smote them down on every side, until those who remained alive craved peace, and bade Galahad and his fellows come into the castle for the night; 'and on the morn,' they said, 'we dare say ye will be of one accord with us when ye know the reason for our custom.' So awhile they rested, and the knights told them that in the castle lay a lady sick to death, who might never gain back her life until she should be anointed with the blood of a pure maiden who was a king's daughter. Then said Percivale's sister, 'I will yield it, and so shall I get health to my soul, and there shall be no battle on the morn.' And even so was it done; but the blood which she gave was so much that she might not live, and as her strength passed away, she said to Percivale, 'I die, brother, for the healing of this lady. And I pray you now, bury me not in this land, but place

me in a boat at the next haven, and when ye be come to the city of Sarras, there to win the Holy Grail, ye shall find me under a tower, and there shall ye bury me in the Spiritual Place, and there shall Galahad be buried and ye also.' Then, as they wept, a voice was heard which said, 'To-morrow at the hour of prime, ye three shall part each to a several way, until ye shall be brought together at the house of the maimed king.' Thus was the lady of the castle healed, and the gentle maiden, King Pelles' daughter, died; and Percivale placed in his dead sister's hand a letter which told of all the help which she had given them, and laid her in a barge covered with black silk; and the wind arose and drove it away until they could see it no more.

In the meanwhile Lancelot had been brought to the water of Morloise, and there he saw a vessel without sail or oar; and as soon as he was in the ship, he felt such sweetness as he had never known before, for all the things which he thought on or desired, these he had. In this joy he laid him down to sleep, for it was yet night: and when it was day he woke and saw lying before him the body of Sir Percivale's sister with the letter in her hand. This letter Sir Lancelot read, and learnt all the things which had befallen her and the knights whom she had aided. Here he abode a month long, for he was nourished by Him who fed His people with manna in the desert. But one night, as he rested by the water-side, he heard the steps of a horse, and a knight lighted off the steed: and when Lancelot had welcomed him, the stranger asked him his name. 'I am Lancelot du Lake,' he said. 'Then art thou my father,' answered the knight. 'Ah,' said Lancelot, 'are ye Galahad?' 'Yea,' he answered; and no tongue can tell their joy, as they embraced each other, and talked afterward of many things. So dwelt they within that ship half-a-year and served God by day and night. But after this, as they arrived at the edge of a forest, a knight clad all in white, and richly horsed, came towards them leading a white horse by his right hand: and he said to Galahad, 'Thou hast been long enough with thy father; and now must thou mount this horse, and go whither thou mayest be led in the quest of the Sangreal.' Then went Galahad to Lancelot and said, 'Sweet father, I know not when I shall see you more.' Then a voice came which said, 'Take heed to do well, for the one shall not see the other again before the day of doom.' Then said Lancelot, 'Son Galahad, since we may not see each other more on earth, I pray God keep me and you both:' and Galahad went into the forest.

And the wind arose and drove Lancelot across the water to a

castle, where two lions kept the entry by the postern door. Then a voice bade him go out of the ship and enter the castle where he should see most part of his desire. So arming himself, he drew near to the gate, and when he saw the lions he drew his sword; and a dwarf coming suddenly smote him so fiercely on the arm that the sword fell out of his hand; and he heard a voice say, 'O man of poor belief, why trustest thou more in thy harness than in thy Maker?' Then said Lancelot, 'I thank thee, Lord, that Thou reprovest me for my misdeed, for now I know that Thou holdest me for Thy servant.' So making the sign of the cross he passed the lions safely, although they made as though they would do him harm; and going into the castle, he found none within, until he came to a chamber which was shut. Here listening he heard a voice singing so sweetly that it seemed to come from no earthly thing, and he thought that it said, 'Joy and honour be to the Father of heaven.' Then Lancelot knelt before the chamber, for within it, he knew, lay the Sangreal, and he prayed earnestly that he might now see some of the things for which he was seeking. Then through the opened doors came a burst of light, as from all the torches in the world; but when he drew near to enter, a voice said, 'See thou come not hither;' and drawing back, he saw in the midst of the chamber a table of silver and the holy vessel covered with red samite, and round about it stood many angels, of whom one held a burning taper, and the other a cross. Before the vessel stood a priest, as at the sacring of the mass; and it seemed to Lancelot that above the priest's hands were three men, of whom two put the youngest between the priest's hands, that he might lift it up and show it to the people. Then, thinking that the priest had great need of help to lift so great a burden, Lancelot hastened toward the silver table: and straightway he felt as though there passed on him a breath of fire, and he fell to the earth as a man without life.

Four and twenty days and nights lay Lancelot still as the dead; and at the end of the days he waked up, and when he learnt all that had happened, he said, 'The four and twenty days are a penance for the four and twenty years during which I have been a sinner.' Then, rising up, he put on him first the hair shirt, and over this a shirt of linen, and on this again a scarlet robe, and then they who stood by knew him to be the good Sir Lancelot; and word was borne to King Pelles who came right gladly to greet him, though he had for him heavy tidings, for his child the fair Elaine was dead. Four days he abode with Pelles, and the Sangreal filled the tables with all manner of meats that the heart of man might desire.

Then departing from the house of King Pelles, he made his way at length to Camelot, where he found King Arthur and the queen; but of the knights of the Round Table nearly one-half had been slain and a few only had come back, and among these were Ector, Gawaine, and Lionel. Great was the joy of Arthur and Guenevere when they saw Sir Lancelot, and they asked him to tell all that had befallen him and his fellows. So he told them all the story of Galahad, Percivale, and Bors: and the king said, 'Would all three were here.' 'That shall never be,' said Lancelot, 'for only upon one of these shall thine eyes rest again.'

Now Galahad, as he went his way, came to the abbey where lay King Modrains who had been long blind; and when the king heard who it was that had come, he rose up and said, 'Galahad, the servant of Jesus Christ, for whose coming I have so long tarried, let me rest between thine arms, for thou art as the lily and the rose for purity and sweetness.' Then Galahad took the king in his arms, and the blind man's spirit passed gently away. Then Galahad placed him in the earth as a king ought to be placed: and passing on he came to a well which boiled with great waves; but so soon as he put his hand to it, it burnt no more, and became still: and ever after it was called Galahad's well.

Yet a few days later he reached the Castle of Carbonek in the company of Sir Bors and Sir Percivale; and there as they sat in the chamber, a voice said, 'Depart ye who ought not to sit at the table of Jesus Christ, for now shall the true knights be fed.' So with the three knights remained only King Pelles and Eliazar his son and a maid who was his niece. Then came in nine knights all armed, who said that they were come, three from Gaul, three from Ireland, and three from Denmark, to be with Galahad at the table where the holy meat should be parted: and presently four women bare in upon a bed a sick man wearing a golden crown, who said, 'Ye be welcome, Galahad; much have I desired your coming, so great and so long has been my pain and anguish: but now I trust the end of my pains is come.' Then said a voice again, 'There be two among you that are not in the quest of the Sangreal, and therefore depart ye;' and King Pelles and his son went their way.

Then straightway the knights deemed that four angels bare in a chair a man clothed in likeness of a bishop, and set him before the silver table whereon was the Sangreal, and on his forehead were letters which said, 'See ye here Joseph the first bishop of Christendom.' And the knights marvelled, for that bishop was dead more than three hundred years. Then they heard the

chamber doors open and angels came in, two bearing waxen candles, the third a towel, and the fourth a spear which bled three drops that fell within a box which he carried in his other hand · and when the candles were set on the table, they covered the vessel with the towel, and the fourth put the spear upright upon the vessel. So there, as the bishop came to the sacring of the mass, they saw come out of the holy vessel one that had all the signs of the passion of Jesus Christ, who said, 'My servants and my true children, ye shall now see a part of my hidden things, and receive the high meat which ye have so long desired.' Then said he to Galahad, 'Knowest thou what I hold between my hands?' and Galahad said, 'Nay.' 'This,' he said, 'is the holy dish in which I ate the lamb on Shrove Tuesday; and now must thou go hence, and bear with thee this holy vessel; and by the sea-shore ye shall find your vessel ready, thou, and Sir Percivale, and Sir Bors; and two of you shall die in my service, and one shall come again, bearing tidings.' Then giving them his blessing, he vanished away; and Galahad having touched with his fingers the blood that dropped from the spear, anointed the limbs of the maimed king, who started up on his feet as a whole man, thanking God.

That same night, at midnight, a voice came among them which said, 'My sons and not my chieftains, my friends and not my warriors, go hence where ye hope best to do, and as I bade you.' So in all haste they went their way, and coming to the shore found the ship, which bare them away to the city of Sarras; and there, as they would have landed, they saw the ship in which Percivale had placed his sister. Then said Percivale, 'She has kept her covenant well.' Then with the silver table they went towards the city, but it needed a fourth man to aid in bearing it, and Galahad called to an old man who stood by the city gate. 'Truly,' said he, 'I have not gone but with crutches these ten years.' 'Care thou not,' said Galahad, 'only help us:' and as soon as he rose to help them, he was whole. Then all the city stirred for the tidings of the cripple who had been healed by the knights who were come thither; and they brought up the body of Sir Percivale's sister and buried her, as she had besought them.

But the king of the city was a tyrant; and when he had heard of all that happened, he took them and prisoned them in his dungeon, and there they lay, fed by the Sangreal, till the year was ended, when the king, having fallen sick, sent for them to crave their mercy. So when the king was dead, the people said that Galahad should be king in his stead, and they placed on his head

the golden crown. On the morrow, rising early, he saw kneeling before the holy vessel, a man in the likeness of a bishop, who had about him a great company of angels; and when he had ended the sacrament of the mass, he called Galahad, and said, 'Thou shalt see now that which thou long hast yearned to see.' Then the old man offered to Galahad the holy wafer, and Galahad received it gladly and meekly, and he said to him, 'I am Joseph of Arimathie, and I have been sent to thee for two things,—because thou hast seen the Sangreal, and because thou art clean and pure.'

Then Galahad went to Percivale, and kissed him, and commending his soul to God, said, 'Bid Sir Lancelot, my father, take heed of this unstable world.' So saying he kneeled down and prayed, and then the angels bare away his soul to heaven; and Percivale and Bors saw a hand take up the vessel and the spear and bear them away to heaven.

Since that day, has no man been so hardy as to say that he has seen the Sangreal.

A year and two months from this time Sir Percivale dwelt in religious clothing with a hermit, and Sir Bors abode with him in his knight's dress. Then Sir Percivale passed out of this world, and Bors laid him by the side of his sister and Galahad in the Spiritual Place: and hastening thence he journeyed away until he came to Camelot, and told to King Arthur and to Sir Lancelot all the things which had happened. 'Right welcome art thou,' said Sir Lancelot, 'and all that ever I can do for thee thou shalt find my poor body ever ready to do, while the life remains in it.' 'And be thou sure,' said Bors, 'that I will never part from thee while our lives shall last.' 'I will, as thou wilt,' said Sir Lancelot.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STORY OF THE MAID OF ASTOLAT.

So the days went on after Sir Lancelot had come back from the quest of the Sangreal: and he forgot the words which he had spoken, and went back to his old love for Queen Guenevere, and the heart of Guenevere clave the more to him; but because other ladies and maidens sought him to be their champion and he took their parts, therefore was the queen's anger kindled, and she chid Sir Lancelot for the cooling of his love. Long he pleaded his

cause, and told her how but for the love of her he might in the search for the holy vessel have done as well as his son Sir Galahad; but he spake in vain, and Guenevere bade him depart and see her face no more. Then as he was going away in heaviness, Sir Bors strove to cheer him, and Lancelot told him all the words that had come from her lips. 'Heed them not,' said Sir Bors: 'she has spoken after this sort before, and she has afterward been the first to repent of her words.' Then Lancelot prayed Sir Bors to win back for him the love of the queen; and then went his way. Sore was Guenevere's grief in her heart, but she set her face as though she heeded not his departing.

Now about this time the queen held a feast for certain of King Arthur's knights; and a knight named Pinel, who hated Sir Gawaine, placed for him on the table a poisoned apple, but another knight named Sir Patrise took it and ate of it and fell down suddenly dead among them. Great was the wrath of the knights, for they deemed it was the queen's doing, and Sir Mador, the near kinsman of the slain man, charged the queen with the treason, and prayed the king that justice might be done upon her. Then, though the king besought him not to be over hasty, yet would he insist that the great should be dealt with as the small: and the king said, 'On the fifteenth day be ready in the field before Westminster: and if then any knight appear on her behalf, do thou thy best and God speed the right: and if thou smite down her champion, then must my queen be burnt, and there shall she be ready for the judgment.'

When Arthur was alone with Guenevere, he asked her how it all came about, and she told him that she could in nowise tell. 'Were Lancelot here, he would do battle for thee. Where is he?' asked the king. And this also she could not tell him. 'What ails thee,' he said, 'that thou canst not keep Lancelot on thy side? But if thou canst not find him, pray Sir Bors to do battle on thy behalf for Lancelot's sake.'

So she made her prayer to Sir Bors: but Bors spake roughly. 'I marvel how thou canst ask me to do aught for thee, when thou hast chased out of the country the man by whom we were most borne up and honoured.' Then in great woe she kneeled down and besought him to have mercy upon her; and even as she knelt, King Arthur came in, and besought him also, because he was sure that she was untruly defamed. So Sir Bors promised, although he knew that he should make many a knight of the Round Table angry. Then departing from the court he rode to Sir Lancelot, who was right glad that he might strike a blow for

the queen; and so he plighted his faith that he would be at Westminster on the judgment day. But in the mean season there was much talk, and many said plainly that for the queen they had no love because she was a destroyer of good knights; but Sir Bors said nay to these words, and that there had been treason among them. And even so it was proved at last; for when the day was come, Sir Lancelot appeared on the field and smote down Sir Mador, and the queen was assoiled of the treason; and while there was great joy with all and Guenevere sank almost to the earth for shame that Lancelot had done to her so great kindness when she had dealt by him so unkindly, suddenly there appeared among them the Lady of the Lake, and charged Sir Pinel openly before the king with the death of Sir Patrise; and Pinel fled from the land as a craven knight, and over the tomb of Sir Patrise a writing was placed which told all the story, to the fouling of Sir Pinel's name, and the assoiling of Queen Guenevere.

But other troubles were nigh at hand for her. For, when the king bade the heralds proclaim a great tournament to be held at Camelot, she would not go thither, and when Lancelot also tarried behind, the king set forth heavy and displeased, and he lodged on the way in a town called Astolat. But when he was gone, the queen spake with Lancelot, and told him that it would be ill for his name and hers if he went not to the jousting; and Lancelot said, 'Thou speakest wisely; but thy wisdom is late in coming. Yet will I go at thy bidding: but at the jousts I will be against the king and his company.' On the morrow, then, he rode to Astolat, and when he was come thither, the king saw him as he entered into the house of Sir Bernard. Presently Lancelot asked him for a shield that was not openly known, and Sir Bernard gave him the shield of his son, who was hurt the same day that he was made knight and was able to fight no more; and he prayed his guest to tell him his name. 'That I may not do now,' he said: 'but if I speed well at the jousts, I will come again and tell you.' Then Sir Bernard prayed him to let his younger son Lavaine ride with him to the tourney, and Sir Lavaine was exceedingly eager to go with him, but the eyes of his sister, whom men called the Fair Maid of Astolat, were fixed eagerly on Sir Lancelot; and Elaine (for this was her name) prayed him to wear a red sleeve at the jousts as a token of her. Then said Lancelot, 'I have done no such thing for any maiden before; nevertheless I will wear thy token, and I leave my shield in thy keeping.'

Bravely and mightily fought the knights when the day for the jousting had come; but the bravest and mightiest of all was

Lancelot, whom none knew save the king only. Wherever he bore down on his horse, all were smitten before him like corn before the wind, until Sir Bors by mischance smote him through the shield into his side, and the head of the lance was left in the wound. So great was the pain that Sir Lancelot could not tarry to receive the prize; but riding away with Lavaine, he came to a wood-side, and there bade him draw the truncheon from his side. Loth was Lavaine to do his bidding, for he feared that Lancelot might bleed to death; and when it was done, the stream gushed forth as though his life must pass away. But Lavaine got him at last to a hermit's house, and there the wound was stanched, and slowly his strength came back to him.

Meanwhile King Arthur had returned with his fellowship to London; and Sir Gawaine, on the road, tarried at Astolat at the house of Sir Bernard, and told how the Knight of the Red Sleeve had won the prize over all. 'Now blessed be God,' said Elaine the Fair, 'that he sped so well, for he is the first man I have loved in the world, and he shall be the last.' 'Knowest thou his name?' asked Sir Gawaine. 'Nay,' she said, 'I know neither his name nor whence he comes; but well I know that I love him.' 'How had you knowledge of him at first?' said Sir Gawaine.

Then she told him all: and when Gawaine heard of the shield he prayed that she would show it to him. 'It is the shield of Sir Lancelot du Lake,' he said when the cover had been taken off it. 'Fair maiden, thy honour is great, for four and twenty years have I known this knight, and never saw I him wear token of any lady or maiden. But I fear me that ye may see him again no more.' 'How may this be?' she said. 'Is he slain?' 'Nay,' said Gawaine, 'but he is sorely wounded.' Then Elaine turned to her father, and won his leave that she might ride to Lancelot and tend him while he lay sick: and Gawaine went back to the king and told him all that he had seen and heard.

But the wrath of Queen Guenevere broke out afresh when she knew that Lancelot had borne in the tourney the red sleeve of the Maiden of Astolat, and many a hard word she spake against him to Sir Bors. And Elaine coming to Camelot met her brother Lavaine, and asked him how fared her lord Sir Lancelot. 'Who told you,' he asked, 'that his name is Lancelot?' 'Sir Gawaine knew him by his shield,' she said: and going with her brother she reached the hermitage where Lancelot lay. There, as she saw him sick and pale in his bed, she could not speak, but fell down in a swoon and lay a great while. But when her strength came back to her a little, Lancelot said to Lavaine, 'Bring her to

me;' and kissing her he said, 'Thou puttest me to pain, fair maiden; wherefore weep no more. If thou hast come to cheer me, thou art right welcome, and of my wound I trust soon to be whole.' So there she tarried, watching him day and night, so that never woman did more for man than she did for Sir Lancelot.

Thither, also, after long wandering and search, came Sir Bors, for he yearned to throw himself at Lancelot's feet, and crave his forgiveness for the wound which he had unwittingly given him. And Lancelot said, 'Thou art right welcome, cousin, but of these matters let us say no more. All shall be welcome that God sendeth.' Then Bors told him of the queen's wrath and of the cause of it, and looking at Elaine, he asked, 'Is this she whom men call the Maiden of Astolat?' 'Yes,' said Lancelot, 'it is she whom I can by no means put from me.' 'Why shouldst thou put her from thee?' said Bors. 'Happier far were it for thee if thou couldst love her; but of that I cannot advise thee. Only I see well that all her love is given to thee, nor is she the first that has lost her pain upon thee.'

When three days more were past, Sir Lancelot felt himself so strong that he sought to be on his horse again; but the steed was fresh and fiery, and as he leaped, he made the knight's wound burst forth again, and once more Lancelot was well nigh dead. In sore grief Elaine knelt beside him and sought to awaken him with her kisses; but little could they do until the good hermit came and stanched the bleeding. Then Sir Bors hastened to the king, to tell him of all that had befallen Lancelot, and the king was sorry, but Guenevere said, 'I would he had not his life.' 'His life he shall have,' said Bors, 'and except thee none should wish it otherwise but we should shorten their lives. Many a time before hast thou been wroth with Sir Lancelot, and each time hath he been proved to be a true and faithful knight.'

But at length the time came when Lancelot must depart, for now was he well and strong again, and so great was the love that Elaine bare that in nowise could she withstand it. 'Have mercy on me,' she said, 'and leave me not to die.' 'What wouldst thou?' asked Lancelot. 'To be thy wife,' said the maid of Astolat. 'Nay,' answered Lancelot, 'never shall I be a wedded man.' 'Then be thou my love,' she said; but in that too he said her nay, for he would not do her wrong. 'Then must I die for my love,' said Elaine. And ever from that hour, when Sir Lancelot was gone, she pined away, until, when ten days were past, she was shriven, and the priest bade her leave such thoughts. 'Why

should I leave such thoughts?' she said, 'am I not an earthly woman? Yea, while my breath is in my body, I will complain, for I do no offence though I love an earthly man, and none have I loved but Sir Lancelot, and never shall I.' Then calling her father and her brother, she bade them write for her a letter of which she gave the words. 'When I am dead,' she said, 'and while my body is yet warm, let this letter be put in my right hand, and my hand bound fast with the letter until I be cold; and let me be put in a fair bed with all the richest clothes that I have about me; and so let my bed and all my richest clothes be borne with me in a chariot to the next place where Thames is; and there let me be put within a barge, and let my barge be covered with black samite over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you, let it be done.' And when she had so said, she died; and they put her body in the barge, and sent it on the river to Westminster. And so for her love died the maid of Astolat.

Now at Westminster King Arthur was speaking with the queen near a window, when they spied a barge, and marvelled what it could mean; and going down to the river, they found in the barge, wrapped in cloth of gold, and lying as though she smiled, the body of the fair Elaine; and the queen spying the letter in her right hand told the king, who carried it away and bade the clerk read it; and the words of the letter said only this: 'Most noble Sir Lancelot, death hath made a severance between us for thy love, for I whom men called the Fair Maiden of Astolat was your lover. Pray thou for my soul, as thou art peerless.' And all wept who heard the words; but when Lancelot came, whom the king sent for, he said, 'I am heavy for the fair maiden's death. Yet was it none of my devising, for she loved me out of measure, and nought would content her but that she must be either my wife or my love, and neither of these things could I grant to her.' Many a knight came that day to look on her fair face, and on the morrow they buried her richly. And when all was done, the queen sent for Lancelot and craved his forgiveness because she had been wroth with him without cause. 'It is not the first time that thou hast been thus wroth with me,' said Sir Lancelot.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE JUDGMENT OF QUEEN GUENEVERE.

THEN awhile they abode joyously together; and when the merry month of May came round, Queen Guenevere rode into the forest with her knights of the Round Table, all clad in green, and ten ladies with her. But even while they were sporting among the trees and flowers, an evil knight watched them named Meliagrance, the son of King Bagdemagus, who had long loved the queen and sought to steal her away when Sir Lancelot might not be with her; and now when he saw that she had but ten knights with her, he came with eightscore men well harnessed, and bade the queen and her knights stand still. 'Thou shamest all knighthood and thyself,' said the queen. 'Be that as it may,' said Sir Meliagrance, 'I have loved you many a year, and now I will take you as I find you.' Stoutly the ten knights fought for Queen Guenevere, until of the men of Sir Meliagrance forty lay dead upon the field. But they were sore bestead; and Guenevere cried out for pity and sorrow, 'Sir Knight, I will go with you upon this covenant, that thou wilt save these knights, and that they be led with me whithersoever thou mayst take me.'

So they rode together, and Sir Meliagrance was sorely afraid lest the queen might send tidings of her durance to Sir Lancelot. But though he kept close watch, yet was Guenevere able to speak for a moment with a child of her chamber, and she charged him to bear a ring to Sir Lancelot and bid him come to rescue her. 'Spare not thy horse,' said she, 'either for water or for land.' So when the child spied his time he rode swiftly away, and although Sir Meliagrance sent men after him their quest was vain. Then said he to Guenevere, 'I see that thou wouldst betray me, but I shall make ready for Sir Lancelot's coming.'

Swiftly rode the child to Westminster, and more swiftly sped Sir Lancelot back, leaving charge to Sir Lavaine that he should hasten after him with all his might, to rescue the queen, her knights, and her ladies, from her traitorous enemies. And many a peril had he to pass on the road, for Sir Meliagrance placed men who shot his horse; and at last a cart came by for gathering wood, but when he prayed the woodman to let him ride on it, the woodman said nay, not once or twice; and straightway the knight slew him. Then his fellow was afraid, and brought Sir Lancelot in his cart to the castle where the queen lay, and thrust-

ing back the gate, Lancelot smote the porter under the ear with his gauntlet so that his neck brake.

Then was the traitor heart of Meliagrance bowed down with fear, and hastening into the presence of Queen Guenevere he threw himself at her feet and craved mercy, and put all things in the castle at her will. 'Better is peace than war,' said Guenevere, and she went to greet Sir Lancelot, who, standing in the inner court, bade the traitor come forth and do battle. 'Why art thou so moved, Sir Lancelot?' asked the queen. 'Why dost thou put this question to me?' answered Lancelot; 'thou oughtest to be more wroth than I, for thou hast the hurt and the dishonour.' 'Thou sayest true,' said the queen, 'and I thank thee. Yet must thou come in peaceably, for all things here are put into my hands, and the knight is sorely ashamed for his wrong doing.' 'That may well be,' said Sir Lancelot, 'yet are there none upon earth save thee and my Lord King Arthur, who should stay me from leaving the heart of Sir Meliagrance full cold before I depart hence.' Then she took him by his bare hand, for he had taken off his gauntlet, and she brought him into her chamber, where her ladies unarmed him, and the ten wounded knights rejoiced exceedingly when they beheld him; and for many a day after he was called the Knight of the Cart.

Now Lancelot and the queen talked together, and she made him promise that the same night he should come to a window barred with iron towards a garden when all folk were asleep. All that day the queen tended the wounded knights; and when at night Sir Lancelot was in the chamber set apart for him, he told Sir Lavaine that he must go and speak with the queen. 'Let me go with you,' said Sir Lavaine, 'for sorely do I fear the treachery of Sir Meliagrance.' 'I thank ye,' said Lancelot, 'but I will have no one with me.' Then sword in hand he went to a place where he had spied a ladder, which he carried to the window, and then he spake of many things with the queen. 'Would I were by thy side,' said he at length. 'I will, as thou wilt,' answered Guenevere. 'Now shall I prove my might,' he said, and seizing the bars he wrested them clean out from the wall, but one of the bars wounded his head to the bone; and when he could tarry there no longer, he went out again at the window, putting the bars in their place as well as he could.

But in the morning Sir Meliagrance espied the blood of Sir Lancelot in the queen's chamber, and he deemed that it was the blood of one of the wounded knights, and that the queen was false to King Arthur. Therewith he charged her with the wrong

doing, and the ten knights in hot anger told him that he said falsely and that they would make good their word upon their bodies; and the tidings of these things were brought to Sir Lancelot, and coming forth he met Sir Meliagrance, who told him again of that which had befallen. 'Beware what thou doest,' said Sir Lancelot. 'And beware thou too,' said Meliagrance, 'for peerless though thou mayest be, yet if thou sidest with them, thou wilt take part in a wrong quarrel, for God will have a stroke in every battle.' 'God is to be feared,' answered Lancelot; 'but I tell you plainly that none of these knights was here with my lady Queen Guenevere, and that will I prove by my hands.' So they exchanged gloves, and gaged to do battle on the eighth day in the field beside Westminster. 'In the mean season,' said Sir Meliagrance, 'plot thou no treason against me.' 'Never have I plotted treason against any,' answered Lancelot, 'and that thou very well knowest.' Then after dinner Meliagrance asked Lancelot if he would see the passages of the castle; and Lancelot followed him in all knightly faith and trust, until he trod on a trap and the board rolled, and he fell ten fathom down into a dungeon full of straw.

Great was the marvelling when Sir Lancelot could nowhere be seen; but at last they deemed that he had gone his way as he was wont to do suddenly. Then Sir Lavaine got together litters for the wounded knights, and he journeyed with them all and with the queen and her ladies to Westminster, and told the king all that had happened, and how Meliagrance had gaged to do battle on the eighth day with Lancelot. 'He has taken upon him a great thing,' said the king; 'but where is Sir Lancelot?' 'We wot not where he is,' answered Lavaine, but we deem he has ridden forth upon some errand.' 'Let him be,' said Arthur; 'he will meet his pledge, if he be not trapped with some treason.'

Meanwhile Sir Lancelot lay in the dungeon, where every day a maiden brought him food and drink, and wooed him to love her. 'Ye are not wise,' she said, when he would not grant her prayer, 'for but by my will thou canst not go forth, and if thou be not at Westminster on the day of battle, the queen will die in the flames.' 'God forbid,' he said, 'that she should be burnt for my default: but be thou sure they will deem, if I come not, that I am in prison or sick or dead; and sure I am that some knight of my kinsfolk will take up my quarrel.' At last on the day of battle she said to him, 'Thou art over-hard of heart; and if thou wilt but kiss me, I should set thee free with thy armour and with the best horse in the castle stables.' 'Nay,' said Lancelot,

'I know not if there be any wrong in kissing thee:' so he kissed her and went his way on a white horse which she gave him: and as he left her he said, 'Thou hast done a good deed, and for it I will do thee a service if ever it be in my power.'

The lists were made ready at Westminster, and the queen stood by the pile of wood, and Meliagrance looked for judgment against her because Sir Lancelot came not, and all were ashamed that the queen should be burnt for this cause. Then said Sir Layaine to the king, 'Sure am I that Lancelot would be here, if he were not sick or in prison or dead; and therefore, I pray you, suffer me to do battle in his stead to save my lady the queen.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' said the king, 'for I dare to say that this knight's charge is false, seeing there is not one of the wounded knights but says that it is untrue, and that if they could stand they would prove their words with their bodies.' But even as the heralds were going to cry the onset, Sir Lancelot was seen speeding on with all the strength of his white steed. 'Ho! and abide,' cried the king; and Lancelot coming up told how Meliagrance had dealt with him from first to last, so that all who heard him felt shame of the traitor. So in the battle Sir Lancelot bare down on him and smote him with the first blow, and Meliagrance said, 'I yield me as overcome; save my life.' Then was Lancelot sore vexed, for he longed greatly to slay Sir Meliagrance, and he looked to the queen to see what she would have: and she made a sign that Sir Meliagrance should die. 'Rise up,' said Lancelot, 'and do battle to the uttermost.' 'Nay, I rise not,' he answered, 'until ye take me as recreant and overcome.' 'That will I not,' said Lancelot: 'but I will make thee a large proffer. I will leave unarmed my head and the left quarter of my body, and my left hand shall be bound behind me; and so will we fight together.' 'So be it,' said Meliagrance; and so was it done; but in spite of his vantage his head was smitten in twain by the first blow from Sir Lancelot's sword; and more was Lancelot cherished of the king and queen than ever he had been before.

After this King Arthur held his court at Carlisle; and thither was brought in a litter Sir Urre of Hungary, whose mother had borne him for seven years from land to land in quest of some one who might stanch the bleeding wounds which he had received at the hands of a knight whom he had slain in Spain; and this knight's mother was a sorceress, who said that Sir Urre's wounds should ever remain open until they were searched by the best knight in the world.

Then Sir Urre's mother told the king all the story; and Arthur

said, 'I will handle his wounds, not that I think myself worthy to heal your son, but because I would encourage other knights to do as I will do.' So the king softly handled him, and a hundred and ten knights after him; but still the wounds bled on. 'Where is Sir Lancelot,' cried the king, 'that he is not here at this time?' and as they spoke of many things, Lancelot was seen riding towards them; and when Sir Urre's sister saw him, she ran to her brother and said, 'Brother, here is a knight come to whom my heart greatly turns.' 'Yea,' said Urre, 'and so doth mine more than to all others that have searched me; and now I hope to be healed.' Then said the king to Lancelot that he must now essay what they had sought to do: but he answered that he dared not to thrust himself forward when so many noble knights and the king had tried in vain before him. 'Nay, then, thou shalt not choose,' said Arthur, 'for I will charge thee to do as we have done.' And not only did the knights pray him so to do, but Sir Urre besought him earnestly to heal him, 'for,' he said, 'since thou camest my wounds seem as though they hurt me not.' Then Lancelot kneeled down by the wounded knight, and prayed that God might give him grace to do that which of himself he might never do; and after this, each wound, as he laid his hand upon it, healed up and left the flesh as fair as it had been before Sir Urre was hurt. Then all knelt down and gave thanks to God, and Lancelot wept as a child. So came Sir Urre of Hungary into Carlisle lusty and strong, and there were joustings in which he and Sir Lavaine wrought best, and after this Lavaine was married to Sir Urre's sister.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SIEGE OF JOYOUS GARD.

In merry May, when Summer comes to gladden men with fresh flowers, the flower of knighthood was crushed; and this evil was wrought by two unhappy knights, Agravaine and Mordred. For these two hated Guenevere, and daily and nightly they watched for Sir Lancelot; and at last Agravaine said openly that they must tell the king of the falsehood of the queen. 'Speak not of such matters to me,' said Gawaine to his brothers, 'for I will not be of your counsel:' and so said Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth.

'Then will I be with you,' said Mordred. 'I would that ye left all this,' answered Gawaine, 'for I know what will fall of it.' 'Fall of it what may,' said Agravaine, 'I will show all unto the king.' And even so, in spite of all that Gawaine and Gaheris and Gareth might say, to the king they came and charged the queen and Sir Lancelot of treason. 'If it be so,' said Arthur, 'I would that Lancelot be taken in the deed, for I know no knight that is able to match him, and I should be loth to begin such a thing unless I might have proofs upon it.' Then Agravaine counselled the king to send word to the queen that he should be away one night, that so Guenevere might send for Lancelot or Lancelot go to Guenevere, and thus they should be entrapped. So the next day the king went hunting, and sent this message to the queen: and in the evening Sir Lancelot told Bors that he would go and speak with Guenevere. 'Nay, do not thus,' said Bors, 'for I fear sorely that Agravaine is on the watch to do you shame.' 'Fear not,' answered Lancelot; 'the queen has sent for me, and I will not be so much a coward but she shall see me.'

So Lancelot passed into the queen's chamber; and while he was yet there, Sir Agravaine and Mordred came with twelve knights, and cried out to him, 'Now, traitor, thou art taken:' and all fourteen were armed as for a battle. Then said Lancelot to Guenevere, 'Let me have but some armour, and I shall soon stint their malice.' 'Alas!' she said, 'I have none here, and much I fear that our long love is coming to its end, and against so many armed men thou canst not stand.' Louder yet shouted the knights outside, until Lancelot said that death were better than to endure all this pain. Then taking the queen in his arms, he kissed her and said, 'Most noble Christian queen, pray for my soul if I be here slain, and trouble not thyself: for well I know that Sir Urre and Sir Bors, and other my kinsfolk will rescue thee and will carry thee away to my lands where thou mayest live like a queen.' 'Nay,' she said, 'that may not be, for if thou art slain I shall not care to live, and I will take my death as meekly as ever did any Christian queen.'

Then Lancelot made ready for the fight, and opening the door he gave space for one man only to come; and in strode a stalwart knight, named Colgrevance of Gore; and before he could strike, Lancelot smote him dead with a buffet upon the helmet; and drawing the body within the door, he donned the dead man's armour, and so harnessed he slew Agravaine and the twelve knights, and Mordred alone remained alive, and he fled away wounded. Then turning to the queen he said, 'I fear me all our

true love is brought to an end, for now will King Arthur be my foe. But if it please thee to abide with me, I will save you from all dangers so far as I may.' So Lancelot kissed Guenevere, and either gave other a ring, and the knight went to his own lodging.

After this Lancelot took counsel with Sir Bors, who said that they must take the woe with the weal, and that they should be able to do as much harm to their enemies as their enemies could do to them. So they summoned all who would take their side, and there were reckoned of them one hundred and forty knights.

'And now say what I shall do,' asked Lancelot, 'if the king adjudge the queen to the flames?' With one voice they cried, 'Rescue her. As many times ye have done for other men's quarrels, so do now for your own.' 'But even this grieves me,' he answered, 'for in rescuing her I must do much harm, and it may be that I shall destroy some of my best friends to my great grief; and if I rescue her, where shall I keep her?' 'That shall be the least care of all,' said Sir Bors. 'Did not Tristram by your will keep Isolte the Fair for three years in Joyous Gard? There may ye keep her, and afterward bring her back to the king, and it may be ye shall have love and thank where others shall have none.' 'Nay,' said Sir Lancelot, 'but have I not a warning in what befel Sir Tristram, for when he had brought the fair Isolte from Joyous Gard into Cornwall, did not the traitor King Mark slay him, as he sat harping before her, by thrusting a glaive into his heart?' 'Yea, so it was,' answered Bors; 'but Mark was ever false, and Arthur is ever true.'

Wounded and covered with blood Mordred came before King Arthur, and told him how he alone of the fourteen knights remained alive, and how Lancelot in the queen's chamber had slain them all. 'Alas!' said the king, 'he is a peerless man, and alas! that ever he should be against me; for now is the noble fellowship of the Round Table broken for ever; and now the queen must die.' Then Gawaine besought the king to tarry yet awhile before he suffered the judgment to be done, 'for,' he said, 'it may be that Lancelot was with the queen for no ill intent, and many a time has he rescued her and rescued thee; and I dare to say that the queen is both good and true, and that Sir Lancelot will prove this upon his body.' 'In good sooth I doubt not he will,' said the king, 'for so mighty is he that none may withstand him, and therefore for her he shall fight no more; and she shall have the law. Yea, if I may get Sir Lancelot, he too shall die shamefully.' 'May I never see it,' answered Gawaine

'Why say ye so?' cried Arthur; 'has he not slain your brother Sir Agravaine, and well-nigh killed your brother Sir Mordred? 'In truth he has,' said Gawaine, 'but I gave them warning what would befall in the end; but they would not hearken to me, and I will not lay their deaths to his charge.' Then said the king, 'Make ready, thou and thy brothers Gaheris and Gareth, to bring the queen to the fire.' 'That will I never do,' answered Gawaine, 'and never shall it be said that I had part or lot in her death.' 'Then,' said the king, 'suffer your brothers to be there.' 'They are young,' answered Gawaine, 'and cannot say you nay.' Then spake the two brothers, 'Sir, thou mayest command us, but it is sorely against our will; but if we be there we will come unarmed and in no harness of war.' And even so they did, and they went forth with the queen to the place where the fire should be kindled; but one whom Lancelot sent to see what should happen had gone back with the tidings, and like a whirlwind came Lancelot with his men, and smote on the right hand and on the left all who stood in harness round the queen; and there was a great thronging and crushing, and in the tumult the sword of Sir Lancelot smote down the good knights Gaheris and Gareth, and their bodies were found in the thickest of the press. So, having rescued the queen, he rode with her to his castle of Joyous Gard.

'Alas! that ever I wore a crown,' said the king when he heard the tidings, 'for now have I lost the fairest fellowship that ever Christian king held together. And now I charge you all, tell not Sir Gawaine of the death of his brothers, for if he hears the news it will well nigh drive him mad. Ah me! that Lancelot should slay Gareth, who loved him above all earthly men.' 'That is truth,' said some knights, 'but Lancelot knew them not in the hustling of the fight, and he willed not to slay either.' 'It may be,' said the king: 'but their death will cause the greatest war that ever was. Alas! Agravaine, for thine evil will, that thou and Mordred should cause all this sorrow.'

Then there came one to Gawaine and told how Lancelot had rescued the queen. 'In that,' said Gawaine, 'he has done a knightly deed; but where are my brethren?' 'They are slain,' answered the messenger, 'and it is noised that Lancelot slew them.' 'That may I not believe,' said Sir Gawaine, 'for Gareth loved him better than all other men.' 'Nevertheless,' said the man, 'it is noised that Lancelot slew him.' Then Gawaine swooned away for his sorrow; and when he arose, he ran hastily to the king his uncle, and told him how his brothers had been slain; and the king said that their deaths must be avenged. 'I

make you now a promise,' answered Gawaine, 'that I will never fail Lancelot until he or I be slain. Get you then our friends together; and I shall seek him, if it be through seven kingdoms.' 'Ye need not seek him so far,' said the king, 'for Lancelot will abide us in Joyous Gard.'

So writs were sent to summon all who would fight for the king, and a mighty host was gathered to lay siege to Joyous Gard: but Lancelot was loth to fight against the man who had made him a knight, and he kept all his people within the castle wall. But one day in harvest time he looked over the walls, and spake with the king and Sir Gawaine, and the king challenged him to come forth and fight. 'God forbid,' said Lancelot, 'that I should encounter the noble king who made me a knight,' 'Fie on thy fair speech,' answered the king. 'I am now thy mortal foe, for thou hast slain my knights and dishonoured my queen.' 'Say what thou wilt,' said Lancelot; 'with you I will not strive; nor is there any knight under heaven that dare make it good upon my person that ever I have dealt traitorously by you. Many a time have I done battle for the queen in other men's quarrels; I have more right to do so now in my own. Take her then into your grace, for she is both true and good.' 'Yea,' cried Gawaine, 'the king shall have both his queen and thee, and shall slay you both as it may please him. What cause hadst thou to slay my brothers who loved thee more than all other men?' 'Well thou knowest,' said Lancelot, 'that it was done unwittingly, and that of free will I had as soon have slain my nephew Sir Bors.' 'Thou liest,' said Sir Gawaine; 'and while I live, I will make war upon thee.' 'Little hope then is there of peace,' said Lancelot, 'if thy mind be thus set; but if it were not so, I should not doubt soon to have the good grace of the king.' In this Sir Lancelot spake truth; and by Sir Gawaine only was Arthur withheld from accord with Lancelot.

Then at Gawaine's bidding all Arthur's knights called on Lancelot to come forth as a false and recreant knight; and Lancelot's people would no more tarry within the castle walls, and he led them forth to the battle, charging all in any wise to save the king and Sir Gawaine. In this fight Sir Gawaine smote down Sir Lionel, who was borne away into the castle, but Sir Bors encountered with King Arthur and bare him to the ground. 'Shall I make an end to this war?' he said to Sir Lancelot, meaning that he would slay the king. 'Lay not thy hands on him,' cried Sir Lancelot, and lighting down he placed the king on his horse again, and said, 'for God's love stint this strife.

Always I forbear you, but you and yours forbear not me; and call to mind also the things that I have done in times past.' Then the tears streamed from Arthur's eyes, as he thought on the courtesy which was in Lancelot more than in any other man; and the King could look on him no more, and riding away he said, 'Alas! that ever this war began.' But presently Gawaine and Bors fought together, and both were sorely wounded; and after this Arthur's men were not so eager for the fray as they had been.

The tidings of this war were borne through all Christendom; and at last they were brought to the pope, who wrote bulls charging the king straightly to accord with Sir Lancelot and to take his queen back again to him. And when the Bishop of Carlisle showed the king these bulls, he knew not what to do, for Gawaine would not suffer him to go back to the old friendship with Sir Lancelot. So it was covenanted that the king should take back the queen, and that Sir Lancelot should have the king's word and seal that he should bring the queen and go back safely. So went the bishop to Joyous Gard, and told Lancelot of the pope's will. Then said Lancelot, 'More shall I rejoice to take her back than I rejoiced to bring her here; but I go not unless it be made sure to me that she will be free and that henceforth no words shall be cast against her.' 'Have no fear,' said the bishop, 'the pope must be obeyed;' and then he showed the pope's writing and King Arthur's; and Lancelot said, 'This is sure enough, for never Arthur brake a promise.'

So all was made ready, and Queen Guenevere went forth with Lancelot from Joyous Gard, clad both in white cloth of gold tissue, and with them a hundred knights in green velvet, each with a branch of olive in his hand in token of peace; and when they reached the Castle of Carlisle, Lancelot stood before the king and said, 'At the pope's will I have brought the queen; and ready I am as ever to prove upon my body that she is both good and true; but thou hast given heed to lying men, and this has caused debate between us. And once more would I say that, had not the right been on my side, I might not alone have had power to withstand and slay so many knights when they called me recreant and traitor as I stood in the queen's chamber.' 'They called thee right,' said Gawaine. 'Nay,' answered Lancelot, 'in their quarrel they proved themselves not right; but ye ought to remember what I have done for you in times past, for if I could have your good-will, I should trust to have the king's good grace.' 'The king may do as he will,' said Gawaine, 'but betwixt thee

and me there can be no peace, for thou hast slain my brothers traitorously, and without pity.' 'Have not I said,' answered Lancelot, 'that their death is my great grief? And now am I ready to walk the land barefoot, and at every ten miles to found a house where they may pray always for their souls; and this were fairer and holier than to make war upon me, and this to no purpose.' Then was every eye that looked on Lancelot filled with tears, saving only Gawaine, who said, 'I have heard thy words and thy proffers, and the king may do as he wills; but if he accords with thee, he shall lose my service; for thou art false to the king and to me.' 'Nay,' said Lancelot, 'if thou chargest me with this, I must answer thee.' 'We are past that at this time,' said Gawaine; 'for the pope's charge and the king's pledge thou art safe to go back now; but in fifteen days thou art safe no more.' Then Lancelot sighed, and as the tears fell on his cheek, he said, 'Alas! most noble Christian realm, whom I have loved above all other realms, now must I leave thee, banished and in shame. Well is it said that in man's life there is no sure abiding.' And to the queen he said, 'Madame, now must I depart from you and from this noble fellowship for ever; but if ever ye be hard bestead by false tongues, send me word, I pray you, and if it be in the power of man, I will deliver you.' Then he kissed the queen, and before all he said, 'Let me see now who will dare to say that the queen is not true to her lord.'

So, while all wept for sorrow, Lancelot departed from the court for ever, and took his way to Joyous Gard, which ever after he called Dolorous Gard. Thence, having taken counsel with his knights, he passed over the sea and sailed to Benwick, and made his knights kings and princes in the land; and thither came also Arthur and Gawaine with threescore thousand men to make war upon him. But even as before, Lancelot was loth to fight against the king, and he sent forth a damsel who should speak with King Arthur, if so be he might make peace. And when she was brought before him and told him of the large proffers of Sir Lancelot the king was eager to bear accord with him, and all the lords prayed him to go back to the old friendship; but still Sir Gawaine said, 'Now that thou art thus far on thy journey, wilt thou turn again?' 'Nay,' answered Arthur, 'I will follow thy counsel; but speak thou to the maiden, for I cannot speak for pity.' Then said Gawaine, 'Damsel, tell Sir Lancelot that it is wasted labour to sue to mine uncle now; and say to him from me that I shall never leave him until he be slain or I.' So she went her way weeping; and when Sir Lancelot had this answer

the tears ran down his cheeks. But his knights came round him and said, 'Why weep? can we not match these in the field?' 'Yea, that we may,' said Lancelot; 'yet was I never so loth to do battle, for I cannot strike at the man who made me knight.'

So came Arthur and his men to Benwick and sat down before it, and day by day there was fighting and slaying of men; but when six months were past, one day Sir Gawaine called to Sir Lancelot to come forth as a coward and a craven; and when he heard these words Lancelot put on his harness and came forth for the battle. But none knew save King Arthur only that every day from the ninth hour until noon Gawaine's strength increased threefold, once for each hour, and after that he became as he had been before. So for those three hours Lancelot struggled hard against him, marvelling that he could do no more than shield himself against the strokes of his enemy, but when he felt that Gawaine had gone back to his own strength, he said, 'Ye have done your part, and now must I do mine;' and soon Sir Gawaine was smitten down. But his hate and his rage were not conquered, and he charged Lancelot to slay him, or he would fight with him again to the death as soon as he might. 'Nay,' said Lancelot, 'I cannot slay a fallen knight, but I will withstand thee as I may.'

In a few days Gawaine was healed of his wound, and again he charged Lancelot to come forth as a recreant and craven knight. But it came to pass, as in the former fight, that Lancelot stood on his guard while Gawaine's strength increased, and once more smote him down after noontide. Then as he lay struggling on the ground he said to Sir Lancelot, 'I am not yet slain: come near me and do this battle to the uttermost.' 'Nay,' answered Lancelot, 'when I see thee on thy feet I will withstand thee, but I cannot smite a wounded man.' 'Be sure then,' answered Gawaine, 'that when I am whole I will do battle with thee again.'

For a month Gawaine lay sick; but when he was now well-nigh ready for the fight, there came tidings which made Arthur hasten with his host to his own country.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LAST DAYS OF ARTHUR, GUENEVERE, AND LANCELOT.

When King Arthur sailed with his people for Benwick, he left Mordred his sister's son to be ruler over his land, and placed Queen Guenevere under his governance. But when Arthur was gone, Mordred caused false letters to be written which said that the king was dead, and he made the people choose him king and got himself crowned at Canterbury. Then going to Camelot he told the queen plainly that she must become his wife, and he named a day on which they should be wedded. But Guenevere asked only that he should suffer her to go to London to get ready what might be needed for the marriage; and Mordred trusted her for her fair speech and suffered her to depart. But Guenevere, when she came to London, shut herself in the Tower and kept it with many knights and men, and Mordred in great wrath came and laid siege to the Tower in vain. Then came the Bishop of Canterbury to him and said, 'Wilt thou shame thyself and all knighthood? How mayest thou wed thy father's wife? Leave this wish, or I will curse thee with bell, book, and candle.' 'I defy thee,' said Mordred, 'do thy worst.' So the bishop went away and cursed him; but when Mordred sought to slay him, he went to Glastonbury and served as priest hermit in a chapel. And soon word came to Mordred that Arthur was coming back to his own land; and he summoned folk to his standard, and many came, for they said that with Arthur was nought but war and strife, and with Mordred was much joy and bliss. So with a great host he came towards Dover, and there waited on the shore to hinder his father from landing in his own realm. But his people could not withstand Arthur and his hosts, and Mordred fled away with those that remained alive.

When the battle was over, Sir Gawaine was found in a boat half-dead; and the heart of King Arthur was well nigh broken for sorrow, for in Lancelot and in Gawaine he had ever most joy. 'My death-day is come,' said Gawaine, 'but it is through my own wilfulness and hastiness, for I am smitten upon the old wound which Sir Lancelot gave me. But give me now pen, ink, and paper that I may write to him with my own hands.' So Gawaine wrote to Lancelot, telling him how he had come by his death, and praying him to come and see his tomb, for the great love

which there had been between them, and to remember the old days before this evil war begun. So at the hour of noon Sir Gawaine died; and it was told to the king that Sir Mordred lay with a new host on Barham Down. And the king went thither, and there was another battle, and Mordred fled away to Canterbury.

But yet the war went on, and at the last it was agreed that King Arthur should on a set day meet Mordred on a down beside Salisbury. On the eve of that day Arthur dreamed that he was sitting in a chair which was fast to a wheel, and far beneath lay a deep black water in which were all manner of serpents and noisome things, and suddenly he thought that the wheel turned round and he fell among the serpents, and each seized him by a limb. Then he waked up in great dread, and after a while he slumbered again, not sleeping nor thoroughly waking, and he thought that Sir Gawaine came to him and many fair ladies with him; and he said, 'Welcome my sister's son; I deemed thou hadst been dead, and I thank God to see thee now alive;' 'but who be these who have come with thee?' 'These,' said Gawaine, 'are ladies for whom I fought in righteous quarrel while I was a living man, and therefore God hath suffered them to bring me hither to you, to warn you of your death; for if thou fight with Mordred on the morn, ye must both be slain and most of the folk on both sides. I bid thee then not to fight, but to make a treaty for a month, for in that time shall Lancelot come with all his knights who shall rescue you and slay Mordred and all that hold with him.'

Then the king waking called for his people and told them of his dream, and sent Sir Lucan and Sir Bedivere with others to Mordred, and a treaty was made that Mordred should have Cornwall and Kent for King Arthur's days, and all the land when the king should be dead. Then was it agreed that Arthur should meet Mordred on the plain. But before the king went, he warned his host if they should see any sword drawn, to strike in fiercely, for he in nowise trusted Mordred; and Mordred gave the like charge to his own people. So they met and drank wine together, and all went well until an adder came out of a little heath-bush and stung a knight on the foot; and when the knight felt the sting and saw the snake he drew his sword to slay the adder. But the hosts, seeing that sword drawn, blew the trumpets and shouted, and there was a fiercer battle than ever had been seen in any Christian land. All day they fought, and when the sun sank in the west there lay on the down dead an hundred thousand men. Then looking around him, Arthur saw that two knights

only, Sir Lucan and Sir Bedivere, were left, and these were sore wounded. 'Now,' said the king, 'I am come to mine end; but I would that I knew where were that traitor Mordred who hath caused all this mischief.' At that moment he espied Mordred leaning on his sword among a great heap of dead men. 'Give me my spear,' said the king to Sir Lucan, 'for I see the traitor who hath done all this wrong.' 'Let him be,' said Sir Lucan, 'remember thy dream.' 'Betide me death, betide me life,' answered the king, 'he shall not escape my hands.' Then running with his spear toward Mordred, he cried, 'Traitor, thy death-day is come,' and therewith he smote him so that the spear ran out through his body. Then Mordred, knowing that he had his death-wound, thrust himself up with all his might up to the ring of the king's spear, and with his sword held in both hands he smote his father on the side of the head that the weapon pierced the helmet and the brain pan: and having so done he fell back dead. But King Arthur lay in a heavy swoon, and Lucan and Bedivere raised him up as they could, and led him betwixt them to a little chapel not far from the sea-side, and after a while they thought it best to bring him to some town. So they raised him up again, but Sir Lucan's strength failed him in the effort, and he sank upon the earth and died. Then as Sir Bedivere wept, the king said, 'Mourn not now. My time hies fast. Take therefore my good sword Excalibur, and throw it into yonder water, and bring me word again of that which thou mayest see.' But as he went to the water-side, the jewels gleaming on the pommel and haft seemed to him too goodly to be thrown away. So he hid Excalibur under a tree. 'What sawest thou?' said the king, when he came back. 'Nought but the waves driven by the wind.' 'That is untruly spoken,' said the king; 'go again and do my bidding.' But it seemed to him still a sin to cast away that noble sword, and again he hid it away. 'What sawest thou?' said Arthur. 'Nought but the waves as they plashed upon the shore.' 'Nay, that is not truly spoken,' said the king; 'and now go again, and on the faith of a true knight do my bidding. Who would ween that thou who hast been to me so loved and dear wouldst betray me for the riches of the sword?' Then Bedivere went the third time to the water-side, and binding the girdle about the hilt, he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came a hand and an arm above the water and caught it, and brandishing it thrice vanished away. So Bedivere hastened back to the king and told him what he had seen. 'Help me hence,' said Arthur, 'for I fear me I have tarried here

over long.' So Bedivere bare him to the water-side, and when they reached it they saw before them a barge with many fair ladies in it. 'Now put me into the barge,' he said, and Bedivere did so softly. And there received him three queens, and he laid his head in one of their laps, and that queen said, 'Ah, dear brother, why hast thou tarried so long from me?' Then cried Bedivere, 'Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now that thou goest away and leavest me here among my enemies?' 'Comfort thyself,' said the king, 'and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no strength to trust in. And as for me, I go to the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound, and if thou never hear more of me, pray for my soul.' And ever the queens wept and wailed as the barge floated away.

Now some of the old tales tell that when he could see it no more, Sir Bedivere went weeping into the forest, and, wandering all the night, came in the morning to a chapel and an hermitage; and the hermit there was he who had been Bishop of Canterbury, and he prayed now by a new-made grave. And Bedivere asked whose body was there laid, and the hermit said, 'I cannot tell you of any surety, but this night, at midnight, came a number of ladies bearing a corpse, and offered a hundred tapers and a hundred bezants.' 'Then it is my lord King Arthur,' said Bedivere, 'that here lies buried,' and therewith he swooned away for sorrow. But when he woke, he would no more go from that place, and there he abode with the hermit, serving God night and day.

And some there are who say that of the three queens one was King Arthur's sister Morgan le Fay, the second the Queen of North Wales, and the third was the Queen of the Waste Lands: and with them was the Lady of the Lake, Nimue, who wedded Pelleas the good knight, and kept him to the uttermost of his days with her in great rest, and had done much good to King Arthur.

And some again there are who say that Arthur is not dead, but that he shall come again and win the holy Cross. And yet others say that on his tomb were these words graven:—

Hic jacet Arthurus rex quondam rexque futurus.

And so the faith lived on that he who had been king long ago will yet be king again.

When the tidings were brought to the queen that King Arthur was slain and all his noble knights, she became a nun at Almesbury, and there lived in fasting, prayers, and almsdeeds.

To Lancelot also came the news that Arthur was sore bestead, and in all haste he gathered his hosts, and crossed the sea to Dover. There when he asked the people of the king, they told him that the king was slain, and Lancelot wept for the heaviest tidings that had ever come to him. Then, having prayed long at Gawaine's tomb, he hastened to Almesbury to see the queen; and there, as he drew near, she swooned for sorrow and joy. But presently she said, 'Call yonder knight hither to me;' and when he was come, she said, before all that stood by, 'Through this man and me has all this war been wrought, and through our love which we have loved together is my most noble lord slain. And now am I set to get my soul in health; and so I pray you, by our old love, that thou see me again in this life no more. Go then to thy realm, and there take thee a wife and live with her in joy and bliss, and withal pray for me.' 'Nay,' answered Lancelot, 'that can I never do; but the lot which thou hast chosen for thyself, that will I choose for me also, and for thee will I pray always. That which thou doest, I must do, for in thee has been my earthly joy: but if I had found thee so minded, I had taken thee now to my own realm; but since this may not be, I go my way, as thou hast bidden me. Wherefore, I pray you, kiss me, and never again more.' 'Nay,' said the queen; and so they parted, but their grief was as though they had been stung with spears, and many times they swooned. Then her ladies bare Guenevere away to her chamber, and Sir Lancelot rode weeping all night through the forest, until he came to a hermitage between high cliffs; and there he found Sir Bedivere with the hermit who had been Bishop of Canterbury; and when he learnt from Bedivere the tale of all that had happened, he threw his arms abroad and said, 'Alas! who may trust this world?' Then he kneeled down and prayed, and besought the bishop that he might become his brother, and there he abode with Sir Bedivere.

Meanwhile Sir Bors sought Lancelot throughout the land, until at last he chanced to come to the chapel, where he found him with the bishop and Sir Bedivere; and he too prayed that he might be suffered to put on the habit and to tarry with them. And yet seven other knights of the Round Table came thither and joined with them. So six years passed away, and then Lancelot took the habit of priesthood, and for a twelvemonth he sang mass. But as the year drew to its end, he saw a vision which bade him go to Almesbury where he should find Guenevere dead, and fetch away her body that it might lie by the side of her lord King Arthur. Even so it came to pass: for queen Guenevere

died half-an-hour before Lancelot reached the nunnery, for she had prayed that she might not have power to see him again with her worldly eyes.

Then Sir Lancelot looked upon her face as she lay dead, and he wept not greatly but sighed. On the morrow, when he had sung mass, they placed the body on a bier and took it away to Glastonbury. Then was the mass of requiem offered: but when the coffin was put in the earth, Sir Lancelot swooned and lay long still, and the hermit came and waked him, saying, 'Thou art to blame, if thou displease God with such sorrow.' 'Nay,' said Lancelot gently, 'I trust I do not displease God, for He knows my intent. For when I remember the beauty and nobleness which was in her and in the king, and when I remember how by my fault and pride they were laid full low who were peerless among Christian people, my sorrow may never have an end.'

From that hour the body of Sir Lancelot wasted away; and after six weeks he fell sick and lay in his bed, and sending for the bishop, he prayed him to make him ready for his last journey. 'Ye need it not now,' he said, 'by God's grace ye shall be well amended in the morn.' 'Nay,' he said, 'my body is near its death, I know well. I pray you therefore shrive me, and let my body be borne to Joyous Gard.'

In the night the bishop woke with great joy of heart, for in his sleep he had seen Lancelot standing before him with a great company of angels, who bare him up to heaven and carried him through the opened gates. Then said Sir Bors that it was but the vexing of dreams; but when they went to his couch, they found him dead, and he lay as though he smiled.

So, as he had desired, his body was borne to Joyous Gard, and laid in the fair choir, with the face bare that all might see him. And thither came, as the mass was sung, his brother Sir Ector, and when he knew that it was Lancelot who lay before him dead, he burst into bitter weeping. 'Ah, Lancelot,' he said, 'thou wast head of all Christian knights, never matched of earthly hand, the courtliest that ever bare shield, the truest lover, the firmest friend, the kindest man.'

All his days thereafter Sir Bedivere abode in the hermitage. But Sir Bors and Sir Ector with the seven other knights who had tarried with Bedivere and Lancelot, went to the Holy Land, and there, when they had done many battles upon the miscreants, on a Good Friday they died.

Merlin.

When Constaunce, King of Britain, who had freed the people from their enemies round about, was dead, his eldest son, Moyne the Monk, was taken from the cloister at Winchester to sit upon the throne. And seeing him to be an unwarlike prince, Angys the Dane gathered together an army of Danes and Saxons and sailed for Britain with many high-banked ships full of kings and earls. Then king Moyne looked that Sir Fortager, which was his father's steward and captain of the host, should lead the Britons out to fight against Angys. But Fortager feigned sickness and would not go out to battle. Wherefore King Moyne went himself, and being unskilled in fight, he was defeated with great slaughter; so that Angys took many British towns and castles, and fortified himself therein. Now twelve British kings which fought under King Moyne being much displeased at his losing this battle, said, 'If Fortager had been our leader this had not been so;' and again, 'As for this Moyne, a gabbling monk, he is no king for us;' so these went to Fortager to ask his counsel; but Fortager replied, 'Seek counsel of your king; it is time enough to ask for mine when Moyne is king no longer.' Wherefore the twelve went straight to King Moyne and slew him as he sat at meat within his hall. Then they returned and greeted Fortager and made him king. Yet there were many who loved still the race of old King Constaunce, and some faithful barons took the two young princes, brothers of King Moyne, Aurilisbrosias and Uther-Pendragon, and sent them into Brittany lest Fortager should slay them also.

Now Fortager gathered together all the British kings, and fought a great battle against Angys, and drave him to his ships, and would have killed him on the strand; but Angys sued for peace, and made a treaty with King Fortager to make war on him no more. So Angys sailed away with all the remnant of his host, and Fortager marched home in triumph. And while he made a feast there came to him the twelve kings which slew King Moyne, seeking reward, saying, 'O King Fortager, behold we have placed thee on high and made thee king; wherefore give us now our

meed.' Fortager answered, 'Being king, in sooth I will show how kings do punish treason:' and he had wild horses brought and tare the traitors limb from limb upon his castle pavement and nailed their mangled bodies on his walls.

Howbeit Fortager thereby kindled against himself the wrath of all who had helped him to the throne, and these rose up and joined with them which spake of bringing back Aurilisbrosias and Uther-Pendragon, and very few held still to Fortager; so he was hunted through his kingdom, and ofttimes beaten sore, barely escaping with his life. Then he bethought to send to Angys into Denmark, and promised half the kingdom if he would come and help him in this strait. And Angys came over again with many men and ships, and helped Fortager to fight against the Britons till the people were subdued, kept down by force of sword and spear. So the war ceased, but peace never came. Fortager went in daily fear of his life from the Britons whom he had betrayed; nor could he now rid himself of Angys whom he feared almost as much lest with his great army he should seize the whole kingdom; and yet again he feared lest the Normans should come over and fight for Aurilisbrosias and Uther-Pendragon to bring them back to the throne of their father Constaunce.

Then Fortager thought with himself to build a huge castle made of well-hewn stone and timber,—a mighty fortress with a lofty tower and battlements, deep ditch and heavy drawbridge,—the like for strength and bigness the world had never seen: and he would build it on the bleak waste of Salisbury Plain, and so dwell safe among his enemies.

Three thousand men began the work at break of day, hewers of wood and carpenters and masons and such as wrought in carven stone. So they began to dig out the foundations and lay the mighty blocks of stone well clamped with iron bonds; and when night came they left the ponderous wall reared up breast high. Next morning, coming to their task, they marvelled much to find the great stones scattered up and down upon the ground, and all their work destroyed. They wrought another day and built the wall up as before, digging the foundations deeper still, and taking greater care to mix the mortar well and fit each stone and clamp it tight. But in the night the wall was overthrown, by what power none could tell.

So Fortager called ten wise and learned clerks and shut them in a chamber open to the sky, to read the stars and find why no man might build up this castle wall. And after nine days the wise men came to the king and said, 'Sir, we have seen signs in

the firmament how an elf-child has been born in Britain, knowing things past and things to come. Find the child and slay him on the plain, and mix the mortar with his blood; so shall the wall stand fast.' Then Fortager sent men to journey three and three into all parts of the country, and seek the child. After wandering many days and weeks, one of these parties of messengers lighted on a town, where, in the market-place, some children at play were quarrelling in their game. 'Thou black elf's son,' the urchins said to one young playmate five years old, 'we will not play with thee, for what thou art we cannot tell.' The messengers hearing these words thought this must surely be the child they sought, but Merlin (for it was he) did not leave them long in doubt. 'Welcome, O messengers,' said he—'behold him whom you seek. Yet my blood will never make Fortager's castle wall stand firm for all the wise men say—blind fools, who grope among the stars for secrets and blunder past the portents at their feet.' Hearing this the men wondered greatly, saying, 'How wottest thou of our errand or of the king's intent?' Merlin answered, 'Pictures pass before my mind of all the things that be and shall be. I will go with you to Fortager and show what hinders building up his fortress on the plain.' So he set out with the messengers, they on their horses, he upon a palfrey.

Now as they journeyed through a town they saw a man buy strong new shoes and clout leather wherewith to mend them when worn out: and Merlin laughed. 'Why do you laugh?' the messengers asked. He answered, 'Because the man will never wear the shoes.' And sure enough he fell dead at his wicket gate. Next day they met a bier whereon was a child being carried to burial, and a priest sang at the head, and an old man followed behind and wept; and Merlin laughed again, for he said, 'Did these but know whose son lies there, the priest would weep and the man would sing:'—and this they found true, for the lad was not the mourner's son but the priest's. And on the third day as they rode, Merlin laughed again, and being asked why, he answered, 'King Fortager in his palace is jealous of his wife's good-looking chamberlain and threatens to take his life; forsooth he wots not that this good-looking wight is but a woman in disguise.' Then when they came to the palace they found it even as the child had said; and Merlin revealed the truth to the king, so the chamberlain was spared. Fortager marvelled much at the wisdom of this child of five years old, and talked with him about the mystery of his castle wall and why it was destroyed each night; and Merlin said, 'The fiends deceived your wise

men, showing false signs among the stars ; for all my kindred in the air are wroth with me because I am baptized into Christendom, and so they fain would trick me out of life. They care not for your castle wall, but only for my death. But send men now to dig a yard beneath the wall's foundation ; they shall find a swift running water, and, underneath, two mighty stones which keep two dragons down. Every night at sundown these two dragons wake and do battle underground, so that the earth quakes and trembles and the wall is shaken down.'

Then straightway Fortager set his men to dig and find if this was true. And soon they came to the stream, which ran both deep and furiously ; so they made a channel lined with masonry and led the water off by another way. And in the river-bed were two heavy slabs of stone which it took many men to rear up : and there beneath them lay the dragons. One was red as flame, with eyes that sparkled like the glint from off a brazen helm, his body a rood long and his tail very great and supple. The other one, milk-white and stern of look, had two fierce grisly heads which darted fire white as levin forks. And as the dragons waked from slumber, all the men fled away quickly in a panic, save only Merlin. Then rising from their dens the two monsters closed in such a deadly combat that the air was full of the fire which they belched forth from their throats ; and the very clouds lightened to the thunder of the battle, and the earth shook. Thus they fought all that long summer night with fang and claw and tail ; they fell and rose again and rose and fell, nor flagged neither till the day dawned. Then the red dragon drave the white into a valley where for a little space he stood at bay, until recovering breath he made a fierce onset, hunting back the red dragon into the plain again, where fixing him by the gullet, he tare him down and with his white hot flames scorched the red dragon to a heap of ashes on the heath. Then the white dragon flew away through the air.

Now after this, Merlin grew in great favour with King Fortager, and was his counsellor in all things that he undertook. Moreover when the masons next began to build, the wall no longer fell down as before. So in due time they built the fortress on the plain, a mighty castle high and strong, of timber and of stone, ramparted about on every hand, a fair white castle the like whereof the world had never seen.

When it was done, men came to Fortager and prayed him ask of Merlin what the battle of the dragons should mean. So Fortager called Merlin, asking whether this strife betokened aught which should hereafter come to pass. But Merlin held his peace.

Then waxing wroth King Fortager threatened to slay him. Merlin smiled in scorn, saying, 'You will never see my death-day; nay, if you bound me fast and drew your sword to strike, you would only fight with air.' Then Fortager entreated him, and sware upon the holy books that no harm should come to him, whatever the interpretation of the mystery might be. Then said Merlin, 'Hearken to the reading of the portent. The red dragon so strong to fight betokens Fortager and all the power he has gained through killing Moyne the king; the white dragon with two heads, the rightful heirs Aurilisbrosias and Uther-Pendragon, whose kingdom you withhold from them. And as the white dragon, hunted to the valley, there regained his strength and drove the red dragon back to the plain, it means that these heirs whom you have driven to Brittany have there found help and succour, and even now sail hitherward with many thousand men, who will come and hunt you through the land till you are driven to your fortress on the plain, shut up therein, and with your wife and child there burnt to ashes. This is the reading of the portent.'

Then Fortager had great sadness of heart, and prayed Merlin to tell him how to avoid the fate he had foretold, or at least how he might save his own life. But Merlin only answered sternly, 'What will be, will be.' And Fortager's anger being kindled, he started up and put forth his hand to seize the seer, but Merlin vanished suddenly from his sight. And while they sought him still within the palace, Merlin was far away in the cell of Blaise the holy hermit. There he remained long time, and wrote a book of prophecies of all the things to happen yet in Britain.

But as for Fortager it all fell out as Merlin had foretold, for Uther-Pendragon with his brother Aurilisbrosias landed with an army and marched to Winchester, and the citizens seeing the old banner of their own British kings, overpowered the Danish garrison and threw the gates wide open for the sons of King Constaunce. And when Fortager and Angys came against them with a host of Danes and Britons, the Britons of their army would not fight against their brethren, but rose into revolt. So Aurilisbrosias and Uther-Pendragon won an easy victory and pursued Fortager as far as Salisbury Plain, where he took refuge in the castle, and the Britons threw wildfire upon the walls and burned him there, together with his wife and child, and levelled the fortress with the ground.

But Angys fled into a citadel whither Uther-Pendragon followed, besieging him therein, but he could not take the place

since it was strongly bulwarked on a hill. Then hearing some barons that had been with Fortager speak oftentimes of Merlin and his exceeding subtlety, Uther-Pendragon sent out men to search for him. And on a day these messengers being at dinner, an old beggar-man with a long white-beard and ragged shoes, and a staff within his hand, came in and asked for alms. They jeered at him, bidding him begone. 'Wise messengers are ye,' the old man said, 'that seek child Merlin, for he hath often met you by the road to-day, and yet you knew him not. Go home to Uther-Pendragon and say that Merlin waits him in the wood hard by; for truly ye will never find him.' And as he spake these words the old man vanished suddenly. Scarce knowing if it were a dream, the messengers returned to Uther-Pendragon, who, hearing this, left Aurilisbrosias to maintain the siege while he went to the wood to seek for Merlin. And first a swineherd met him, next a chapman with his pack, each of whom spake of Merlin; and last there came a comely swain who bade him still wait on, since Merlin would be sure to keep the tryst, but he had first some work to do. So the prince waited until far into the night and then he saw the swain again, who greeted him, saying, 'I am Merlin; I will go with you to the camp.' When they got there Aurilisbrosias said, 'Brother, there came a swain in the night and waked me, saying, "Behold Angys is come out from his citadel and has stolen past your sentinels, seeking to take your life." Then I leapt up, and seeing Angys at the tent door I fell on him and slew him easily, for while the swain stood by I seemed to have the strength of ten, and my sword cut through the brass and iron mail as though they were naught. As for the swain, I missed him when the fight was done.' Uther-Pendragon answered, 'Brother, the swain was Merlin, who is here with me.' Then was Aurilisbrosias very glad, and both the princes thanked Merlin for his help. In the morning when they knew that their leader had been slain, the Danes and Saxons yielded up the citadel, asking only for their lives and for leave to sail away in peace to their own country. Thus the land was free again, and all the people took the elder of the brothers, Uther-Pendragon, and made him king in Winchester, and held a seven nights' feast of coronation.

After this, Merlin told the brothers that one of them would fall in a battle with a very great host of Northmen that would come to avenge the death of Angys, yet would he not say which of them it should be. And in a little time the sea about the Bristol Channel was blackened with a multitude of crested ships,

and Danes and Saxons swarmed upon the beach in numbers like the sand. Then Merlin divided the Britons into two companies, so that with one Uther-Pendragon might give battle from the front and draw them inland, whilst Aurilisbrosias with the other stole round between the Northmen and the sea and fought them in the rear. The fight was fierce and bloody before the Britons drove their foes to their ships. Of thirty thousand Danes and Saxons five thousand only went back, and Aurilisbrosias lay dead upon the sea-beach and with him fourteen thousand Britons, while on the battle-ground for a space three miles by two no man might walk without stepping upon the dead. Then Merlin made a tomb for Aurilisbrosias with huge stones which he brought from Ireland through the air by magic, and all the people mourned for him.

For seven years after this Uther-Pendragon reigned and prospered, and conquered lands in Normandy and Brittany and Gaul, and Merlin counselled him in all things which he did. Merlin also made for him the famed Round Table whereat the best and bravest knights might sit in equal seat. One place alone was kept vacant, wherein none might sit till he came who should fulfil the marvel of the Holy Grail.

And all came to pass as the spirit of Merlin had foreseen, for, when Uther-Pendragon was dead, his son Arthur was chosen king when he had drawn the great sword which was fixed into the stone; and Merlin aided Arthur against all his enemies, and saved him from many perils which threatened his life. But at length the time drew nigh when Merlin should no more sojourn among men.

And so it came to pass that Merlin made a wondrous tomb in the Church of St Stephen at Camelot over twelve kings which Arthur slew. He made twelve images of copper bronze overlaid with gold, and a figure of King Arthur raised above with his sword drawn in his hand. Each image bare a waxen taper which burned day and night. And Merlin told the king, 'By these you shall be shown when I pass from the world of living men. That day the tapers will go out and never after be re-kindled. For you there remains a life of glory; the Sangreal shall be achieved, and you shall pass almost within its presence, yet not see it with your eyes, since they have looked too much upon the blood and dust of war to read the marvel of that holy thing. Fightings will never cease in your day, but you shall gain the victory and be king of Christendom, and at last die nobly in battle as a king should die. For me, alas! I must be prisoned in the air alive,

and wait through ages for the Judge, awake through weary years, whilst others sleep beneath the quiet ground.'

Then Arthur counselled him, since he knew his fate, to guard himself against it by his subtile arts. But the seer answered, 'That which shall be, is: unchangeable as that which was.'

Now the spirits of the air, being very wroth at the discomfiture of all their plans, sought means, all through his life, to entrap Merlin, and snatch him from the world, but he being wistful of their schemes defeated them; nor could they in any wise have power on him until his work was done. But as he waxed in years he was beguiled by a beautiful damsel of the Lake, called Niniame, so that he fell into a dotage for love of her and would follow her whithersoever she went. But Niniame being passing weary of his love, made sport of him, and did but endure him for the wonders which he showed her. And it befell that one day as they sat together in a wood at Broceliande, she entreated Merlin to teach her a certain powerful spell, whereby a man might be shut up for ever in a narrow space about the earth, walled in by air, invisible to all for evermore. And this she begged with tears and promised him her love if he would show it her. And when she wearied him with asking, and beguiled him with many sweet words, he showed her all she asked. Then Niniame lulled him to sleep upon her lap, and rising softly, wrought the spell in the air; and so shut Merlin up for ever in a blackthorn tree within the lonesome wood at Broceliande, where his spirit, tangled in a hopeless maze among the weird black twigs, the more inweaves itself in trying to get free.

Sir Tristrem.

Roland Rise, Lord of Ermonie, was fighting for home and lands against Duke Morgan the invader; and the noise of the battle reached even to the tower where his wife Lady Blanche-Flor, lay in her chamber. Many times the lady sent by Rohand, her faithful messenger, for tidings how the battle went; many times came back the answer, 'The fighting is furious, but neither army yields a yard of ground;' and again, 'The sword of Roland Rise, your lord, is reddened with the blood of full three hundred of his foes.' Presently there came a clatter at the castle gate, and a faithful steed bore home his master's body, not slain in fight, but foully smitten by a traitor's dagger. And when the lady knew her lord was dead, and all the land was conquered, she swooned away, and then her child was born. She named him Tristrem; for she said, 'Thy welcoming is sad, my son.' Then, calling Rohand, she charged him to bring up the child as his own; and drawing from her finger a golden ring, said, 'Keep it for my boy till he is grown, then let him take it to my brother Mark, the King of Cornwall—he will know the ring he gave me, and thereby that Tristrem is his sister Blanche-Flor's son.' Soon after that, she drooped and died, and Rohand took the child home to his wife to bring up with his own babes secretly, for fear of the usurper.

Duke Morgan sent commandment to all the nobles of Ermonie to yield up burgh and city, and come to his council to pay homage. Cruel and haughty was he to his enemies; yet none gave brooch and ring, and shared rewards among his friends so freely as Duke Morgan. Rohand came to the council, rendering homage with his lips for sake of peace and Tristrem his dead master's son; but his heart burned hot against the usurper all the fifteen years he bowed beneath his yoke.

Now when Tristrem was grown a tall and comely youth, well skilled in knightly games, in books and minstrelsy, and practised in the customs of the chase, there came from Norway a merchant ship, freighted with hawks and treasure; and the captain challenged anyone to play at chess with him, staking twenty

shillings a game against a white hawk. Tristrem went on board and played six games, and won six hawks; still they played on, for higher stakes each time, till he had won a hundred pounds. Then the captain, since he could not win the money back, determined to beguile Tristrem of it, and so gave orders to get up anchor and let the ship drift out of haven with the ebbing tide. Meanwhile they played and played and took no note of time. Presently, rising from the table, Tristrem looked about and saw only the grey sea and the fast waning shores, and wept, thinking of Rohand and his home; but the mariners laughed at his distress, and, having bent the sail and manned the oar-banks, they stood for the open sea. Contrary winds and storms beset them ceaselessly nine weeks. Wild waves shattered their oars, their anchor brake, and the tempest tare their sail to ribands and snapped their cordage. Then the mariners feared and said, ''Tis for the boy's sake the sea rages at us, since we have defrauded him.' So they set him ashore at the first land they sighted, and paid his winnings, giving him, besides, food and rich presents, to appease the waves, and sailed away.

It was a land of hill and forest, with black, bare, spray-beaten cliffs rising from out a rock-strewn sea. As the vessel sailed away and grew into a speck against the sky, Tristrem's heart began to sink for loneliness; but having kneeled upon the beach and made his prayer to God, he rose more cheerfully and climbed the cliffs. A-top he found a pathway, and learning from two palmers that he was in Cornwall, promised them ten shillings to bring him to the king's court, where he thought perchance to get employment. Turning aside through a large forest they shortly came upon a party of hunters resting from the chase, whilst men brake up in quarters the stags that had been slain. The hunters took note of Tristrem from the handsome robe of blue and brown wherein the mariners had clothed him, and began to talk; while he, on his part, mocked at their ignorance of venery and the bungling way they mangled the tall game. Then said the hunters, 'We and our fathers have always so cut up the deer, but yonder lies a beast unflayed; show us a better way; we are not loth to learn.'

Tristrem thereupon took the buck, and carved it in true hunting fashion; apportioning to the forester his share, giving the hounds their due, and feeding the raven on the tree. Then he took the huntsman's horn and blew the mort.

Much wondering at his skill, the hunters brought him straightway to Castle Tintagel, to King Mark, who hearing of his

cunning made him ruler of his hunt. And Tristrem sat at meat with the king, and being asked his parentage said he was Rohand's son of Ermonie (as he in truth believed). After the feast ale and mead were served in cups and horns, and the king's harper came and played a lay, whereat Tristrem found much fault, so that the harper grew angry and said, 'Show me the man will play it better.' 'Truly,' answered Tristrem, 'it would not otherwise be just to blame your playing.' Then taking the harp he played so wondrous sweet thereon that even the king's harper was constrained to own he never heard the like before, and all that sat by marvelled at his music. Thereupon King Mark, being greatly astonished and pleased, caused Tristrem to be clad in a sumptuous dress and appointed to have him always at court to harp in the king's chamber morn and night to charm away his care.

Now Rohand wandered over land and sea to find his foster-son, and after searching through seven kingdoms till his garments were in tatters, he at length fell in with one of the same palmers which had guided Tristrem to King Mark, and so found his way to Tintagel. But the porter and the usher, deeming him a mere beggar would not let him pass, until, when Rohand had given to each a fair ring of gold, they changed their minds, and taking him for at least a prince, brought him to Tristrem. Not knowing Rohand in his rags, Tristrem at first spake harshly, but finding who it was, he kneeled, and having asked forgiveness brought him joyfully to King Mark, and claimed the beggar-man as his father before all the nobles, who tittered and made sport of him. Then Rohand was taken to a bath, and his great rough beard having been trimmed, and his tangled white hair combed smoothly out in locks, Tristrem arrayed him in a knight's scarlet robe, fur-broidered; and as he walked into the hall and took his seat beside the king at the banquet table, all they which before jeered at the ill-clad beggar were ashamed before his lordly presence.

After the feast Rohand told the story of Tristrem's birth, showing Blanche-Flor's ring in token, whereat King Mark was exceeding glad and received Tristrem as his nephew. Moreover all the knights and ladies of the court kissed him and paid him obeisance. But when Tristrem heard how his father Roland Rise had met his death through treachery, he prayed King Mark for leave to go to Ermonie to avenge his death. Though loth to part with him, and fearful of the enterprise, the king dubbed Tristrem knight, and gave him a thousand men and many ships, where-

with he sailed away with his foster-father, and after seven days voyage they came to Rohand's castle in Ermonie, and garrisoned themselves there. But fretting to remain within the walls, Sir Tristrem said, 'I will disguise myself and go and speak with Morgan, for I cannot rest longer idle in the castle.' So he took fifteen knights, each bearing a boar's head for a present, and came to Duke Morgan as he sat at meat. Howbeit Rohand determined to follow him with his army, 'For,' thought he, 'the youth is vengeful, and may be will provoke Duke Morgan and be slain.'

Sir Tristrem laid his present down before the Duke and spake thus :—

'God requite thee, Sir King, as thou hast dealt with me and mine.' Duke Morgan answered, 'Whether thou bless or curse, I seek not, but thine errand?'

'Recompense,' said Tristrem, 'for my father's death and for my heritage of Ermonie.'

Then Duke Morgan called him beggar's brat, and smote him in the face with his fist, whereat Sir Tristrem drew his sword and the knights at table rose up to seize him; but at that moment Rohand and his men came up, and so began a battle which spread over all the land, for many barons joined to put down the usurper and restore the kingdom to the son of Roland Rise. With his own hand Tristrem slew Duke Morgan, and then, Rohand helping him, he routed all the army and drave them out of Ermonie. So having regained his land, he bestowed it upon Rohand to hold in vassalage, and taking ship sailed back again to Cornwall.

Now the King of England sent Morannt, a noble knight, the Queen of Ireland's brother, demanding tribute of King Mark, to wit, of gold and silver and of tin three hundred pounds by the year, and every fourth year three hundred children. Then up and spake Sir Tristrem how no tribute was due, since Cornwall was ever a free kingdom, offering with his body to make good the truth in single combat. Morannt told him that he lied, and drawing a ring from off his finger gave it to Sir Tristrem for a gage of battle.

Next day they sailed to an island to fight; but when Tristrem came to land he turned his boat adrift, saying, that one boat would be enough to bring home the conqueror. Furiously they rode together and drave their spears through each other's shield, the lion on Sir Tristrem's and the dragon on Morannt's being pierced; then they wheeled about and met again with a ringing clash of arms and armour, till Morannt's horse brake his back with the shock of his master's spear against Tristrem's hauberk,

Then as they fought on foot, fast and fiercely with their swords, Tristrem, being sorely wounded on the thigh, grew well-nigh mad with pain, and with one swift-handed heavy stroke cleft Moraunt's helmet to his skull, breaking the sword point in his brain. So Moraunt fell dead.

Then Sir Tristrem returned to Tintagel amid great welcomings, and going to the church kneeled down before the altar and offered up his sword in thanksgiving; and King Mark appointed him heir of Cornwall to rule the country after him. But Moraunt's folk bare his body back to Ireland to the queen, with Tristrem's sword-point still sticking in the skull. Leeches came from far with salve and drink to heal the wound in Tristrem's thigh, but for all that they could do it festered and grew worse, and a canker broke out which would not be stayed, for, as it turned out, Moraunt's sword was poisoned. So loathsome grew the wound that none would abide to be in the chamber where Tristrem lay, save only Gouvernayl his faithful servant; for the decaying flesh fouled all the air. Forsaken of his friends and thus become a pest to everyone, Sir Tristrem entered into a little ship with Gouvernayl and his harp for company, and let the vessel drift whither it would. Nine weeks he lay in pain, and thought to die within the boat, but his harp solaced him when nothing else could; then the wind driving the vessel into Dublin haven, he crawled ashore.

It was a summer evening and the wind had ceased. Sea and sky scarce seemed to move, but floated in a smooth, still dream; and Tristrem, resting on the beach, tuned his harp to a sweet melody while the whispering waves lapped softly on the shore. The Queen of Ireland and her daughter, fair Ysonde, sat at their palace window overlooking the sea, and hearing such tender music, came down to see the harper, whom they found surrounded by a crowd of wondering folk hushed into silence at his skill. When they asked his name and country Tristrem put himself upon his guard, for he knew the queen was sister to Moraunt whom he had slain. So he gave his name as Tramtris, a foreign merchant, who had been robbed and wounded sore by pirates. Then the queen, who had marvellous skill in medicine, undertook his cure, and having caused him to be carried to the palace, got ready a potent bath of herbs wherein he bathed from day to day and the wound began to heal. Till he regained his strength, Tramtris remained within the palace and became tutor to the beautiful Ysonde, whom he taught in minstrelsy and chess and poetry till she became as skilful as her master. But when he got well,

vainly they besought the learned merchant Tramtris to abide in Ireland at the court. Not even the rare beauty of his pupil, the fair Ysonde, could make him stay. For Tristrem, off the battle-field, was a grave and quiet man, whose soul was in his book and harp, who had no thought nor care for love, to whom fair women were fair pictures and no more—Ysonde, perchance, the fairest—but a lay upon his harp was worth them all.

So being healed, he sailed back to Cornwall, where he told the story of his cure, with a grim pleasure at having beguiled the Queen of Ireland to heal unwittingly the slayer of her brother; and as he spake often of the loveliness and skill of fair Ysonde, how bright and beautiful she was, King Mark became enamoured of the picture Tristrem drew. Then the barons, jealous of Tristrem's power with the king, persuaded Mark to send him to demand the princess in marriage; thinking, when the knight returned to Ireland as ambassador from Cornwall and bearing his proper name, the queen would surely slay him to avenge the death of Morannt. Tristrem, though he liked not the errand, was forced to go, since, as he was heir to the throne, the barons, if he had said nay, would have accused him of selfish ends in wishing the king not to marry.

Wherefore he came again to Ireland in a richly laden vessel, and sent messengers ashore with costly presents to the queen and princess, craving an audience. But the messengers returned, saying that the people of Dublin were hasting from the city in panic-stricken crowds because of a monstrous fiery dragon which had come upon the land and ravaged it. They told, moreover, how the king proclaimed the hand of fair Ysonde as the prize of the man who should rid the country of this fearful pest. Then Sir Tristrem took his spear and shield and girt on his sword, and being come to land, gat him to horse and rode till he encountered the fiery dragon.

The good spear shattered against the monster's flinty hide; the brave steed staggered and fell dead before the dragon's fiery breath; but Tristrem, leaping to his feet, fought all day long against the scaly beast, and though the flames which it belched forth burnt the armour from his body and scorched his flesh, yet Tristrem rested not until he hewed its neck-bone in twain and cleft its rocky skull. Then having cut out the dragon's tongue he placed it in his hose and set out to return; but his hot skin drew the poison of the tongue into his body, whereby being overcome with faintness, he sank down nigh the carcase and lay there senseless. Now the king's steward passing by, thought

both the monster and Sir Tristrem dead, and so cut off the dragon's head, and taking it to the palace demanded of the king his daughter. Howbeit the queen, doubting his tale, would first go with Ysonde to see the battle-field. There they found a dead steed, and pieces of armour partly melted, and shreds of a rich robe that had been torn. Ysonde said, 'This is not the steward's steed nor yet his armour, nor his robe;' and when they came to a man lying on the ground and found the tongue within his hose, they said, 'Verily this is he that slew the dragon. So kneeling at his side they gave him a cordial, whereon Tristrem, opening his eyes, claimed the victory, and offered to make good his story on the steward's body in single combat for the wager of his merchant ship and cargo. 'A merchant?' Ysonde whispered to her mother—'pity he were not a knight.' But they knew him not. They helped Sir Tristrem to the palace and led him to a bath, and while the queen went to make ready a healing drink, Ysonde remained alone with her champion. She thought within herself, 'I know his face and his long arms and broad shoulders—surely it cannot be Tramtris my old tutor!' Then searching for something to confirm her thought, she picked up Tristrem's sword, but when she saw that the point was broken, her mind went off upon another track, for she knew the broken sword-point they had found in Morannt's skull was carefully preserved in a chest within the palace. So she ran and fetched the piece, when lo! it fitted Tristrem's. Thereby being well assured that this was the slayer of her uncle, she called loudly for the queen, and these two between them would have slain Tristrem in the bath with his own sword, but that the king, entering at the moment, would first hear the truth of the matter. Wherefore Tristrem pleaded that he had indeed slain the queen's brother, but in fair and open battle, though Morannt had treacherously used a venomed sword. Then he called to mind how as Tramtris he had rendered service as tutor to Ysonde, whilst since that time he had so highly praised her that he was even now come over as ambassador to seek her hand in marriage on behalf of Mark the King of Cornwall. By this being pacified towards Tristrem, and learning moreover how he slew the dragon, the king commanded to cast the steward into prison; but to Tristrem he paid great honour, and having set him by his side arrayed in the richest apparel, he caused Ysonde to be led forth and gave her hand to him in presence of the court. 'Yet,' said the king, 'I had far rather that you should wed her yourself.' 'Sire,' he answered, 'if I did I should be shamed for ever in this world

as false to the promise I have made to King Mark.' So Tristrem made ready to depart to England with his uncle's bride.

Now the Queen thought, 'King Mark has never seen Ysonde, and may not care for her, nor she perchance for him. What if they do not love each other when they wed?' Wherefore she mixed a powerful love-potion, that the pair drinking together of the cup upon their marriage night should thereafter love each other so dearly all their lives that nothing in the world might ever come between those two. And this she gave to Brengwain, Ysonde's maid, charging her to be discreet and careful.

Soon after the ship put out to sea, the wind veered round, blowing dead against the prow, so the mariners were forced to take in sail and bend to the oars to make headway in the teeth of wind and sea. Tristrem sat on the oar-bank and with his sinewy arms pulled single-handed a great stern-oar meant for two, till, thirsting at his labour, towards twilight he called for a drink. Brengwain went for it, but by misadventure in the dark she brought the cup wherein the love-potion was and gave it to Ysonde to bear to Tristrem. So he drank of it unwittingly and gave it to Ysonde, and she drank also, and they drained it to the dregs. Then love sprang up within their hearts which nothing while they lived should ever quench again. All through that fortnight's voyage their time passed like a musing dream; for they were drunken with the cup and knew not what they did, nor how the days slipped by, what sky was overhead, what foaming hills of sea their labouring vessel climbed, nor how the rowers toiled: they only knew they loved and ever thirsted for more love. Long did Tristrem battle against the new love that sprang up in his breast, sore tempted to put the vessel's head about and make for another land where he might wed Ysonde and live in happiness. But dearer than self or love to Tristrem was the honour of a knight on ambassage. He had often borne his life in his hand for knighthood's sake and for King Mark, but now after a mighty conflict he did more. For being come to land, he took Ysonde whom he loved so dear, and with a stern, set face led her forth to Mark to be his bride, whilst all the man was broken in an agony of soul. Merrily went the marriage feast with games and minstrelsy; but Tristrem's harp wailed piteously; his faith he had not broken but well-nigh his heart.

But King Mark held lightly by the gift which Tristrem gave so painfully. For there came a minstrel earl seeking a boon before he would play, and Mark having pledged his kingly word

to give whatsoever he should ask, the minstrel played his lay and claimed the queen for guerdon, when, rather than forfeit his oath, King Mark suffered him to lead away the Lady Ysonde—the price of a song.

When Tristrem learnt this after he came back from hunting, his whole soul brake out in bitterness against the king. Then seizing his harp he hasted to the beach, and seeing the earl sail away upon the sea with the queen, he played a wild, sweet song which Ysonde heard afar off, and being taken with a great love-longing she made the earl put back, saying that she was sick and that nothing could comfort her but the sound of Tristrem's harp. They being come to shore, Sir Tristrem laid aside his harp and drawing his sword fought with the earl. But Ysonde, seeing neither got the advantage, and fearing for her lover, ran between their swords, craving a boon of the earl. When he promised to grant it she said, 'Go, journey to King Arthur's court and tell Queen Guenevere there are but two knights and ladies in the whole wide world henceforth, and these are Guenevere and Lancelot, and Tristrem and Ysonde.' So being caught in his own trap the earl was forced to depart upon his errand. But Tristrem brought Ysonde to the palace and restored her to King Mark, saying bitterly, 'Sir King, give gleemen other gifts in time to come.' Yet Sir Tristrem and the fair Ysonde loved ever together.

A knight there was of King Mark's court named Meriadok, who seeing Tristrem watch the queen and worship her with all his eyes whenever she passed through the hall to court or banquet, set himself to spy if ever they met or talked together; for he thought to curry favour with the king. One winter evening he found that a man had walked across the snow towards the palace with sieves upon his feet to hide the tracks; he also picked from a nail by the queen's door a morsel of a green doublet such as Tristrem wore, and he gave it to the king. So Mark went to his wife and pretending to be about to journey to the Holy Land, asked in whose charge she would be left the while. Without a thought she answered, 'Tristrem's;' but Brengwain her maid having whispered to her to be on her guard, she added—'that is because he is your kinsman; but otherwise leave me rather to the care of Meriadok or any other knight.' So for that time the king thought no more of it; but afterward Meriadok persuaded him to send Tristrem away to a neighbouring city.

There Tristrem grieved since he could no more see the queen; for the love that was between them twain no tongue can tell, nor heart think it, nor pen write it. But at last bethinking him

that the river of the city where he was flowed past Ysonde's garden bower at Tintagel, he cut down a hazel branch, and having smoothed it with his knife cast it in the river with these words written thereon:—'A honeysuckle grew around this hazel branch and twined it closely in its arms; but the hazel being cut down the honeysuckle withered and died, and thus made its moan: "Sweet friend, I cannot live without you, nor you without me."' And Ysonde found the branch floating in the stream, and knew it was from her lover; and after that, sometimes by linden chips, at other times by twigs or flowers, the river bore messages to her from Tristrem, so she always knew his mind. But Meriadok set a dwarf to watch in the forest for their trysting-place, and having found it, came and told the king. So the king went, and waiting till he spied the pair, crept softly up to listen to their discourse. But Tristrem saw the king's shadow on the grass, and immediately raising his voice he turned his discourse, and began angrily to upbraid Ysonde for setting his uncle's mind against him, and bitterly reproached her as the cause of his banishment. Ysonde replied in the same strain, saying she would never be satisfied till he was driven from the land, for the scandal he had brought on her fair fame; to which Tristrem answered that he would gladly escape from her malice and go to Wales if she would only obtain for him a small bounty from the king with his dismissal. On this King Mark, convinced that his jealousy was unfounded, came out of his hiding-place quite overcome with joy and tenderness, and having embraced the pair restored Tristrem to favour, and so far from consenting to his departure besought him to return to Tintagel as high constable of the kingdom, to make amends for the injustice done to him.

Three years dwelt Tristrem at the court, going to and fro about his business at the palace, and all that while he strove vainly against the passion that consumed him. The cup's sweet poison rested on his lips and in his heart; and on her lips and in her heart; and for their very lives they could not help but love. What time, the banquet tables being cleared, the knights and dames sate round to hear his lays, Sir Tristrem sang for her alone and played for her, and saw none other in the listening throng; whilst for Ysonde Sir Tristrem was the one knight in all the world. And all men knew of their love and spake of it save the king, who would not know and would not see; for he felt that Ysonde had never been his wife except in outward show, nor ever, spite of all her strivings, could belong to him: and being awed at the great love of Tristrem and Ysonde, he would fain have

kept them near to him and one another, thinking thus with his love to keep theirs in bounds. He sorrowed for himself because he knew that Ysonde's love was not his, and could never be; but he was a man of gentle mind, and most he sorrowed for the lovers, blaming himself for wedding her; and sometimes, for the pure love he bare to both, he wished that death might take him, and so leave them free; for he was greatly touched to see them strive so hard to do their duty and be nought to one another.

But one day, across a flour-sprinkled floor, Meriadok tracked Tristrem on a visit to the queen. Then being discovered, Tristrem fled; but King Mark for his honour's sake must needs take Ysonde to Westminster to prove her innocence by public ordeal of red-hot iron.

Disguised as a ragged peasant, Tristrem followed her and came and stood upon the Thames bank with the crowd. Ysonde looked around for one to bear her from the shore to her ship, and her eyes fell upon the peasant, and knowing him for Tristrem, she said that he and no other should carry her. Whereupon the ragged peasant took her in his arms; and when he had carried her into the midst of the water he kissed the queen, in sight of king and court and all that stood upon the shore and in the ship. The queen's servants would have drowned the peasant for the dire insult, but Ysonde pleaded for him, that being an uncouth man and ignorant of courtesy, perchance he meant no harm—so they let him go. Then being brought to her oath the Queen declared herself a guiltless woman, saying that no man save the king and that rough beggar which carried her across the water had ever kissed her lips. So when the red-hot irons were brought, the king would not suffer her to touch them, but being contented with her oath he caused her innocence to be proclaimed.

Then Sir Tristrem journeyed into Wales and offered his services to King Triamour, who being besieged by a certain giant prince named Urgan, welcomed him gladly. This Urgan, brother to Duke Morgan whom Tristrem slew in Ermonie, no sooner saw his enemy than he challenged him to mortal combat. The giant fought with a twelve-foot staff which he swung with mighty force; but Tristrem, nothing daunted by the crashing blows against his armour, with a deft stroke cut off Giant Urgan's right hand by the wrist, and while the giant fled to his castle for a cunning salve Tristrem picked up his bloody hand and rode off therewith to the city; but Urgan galloping back overtook him on the city bridge, where they fought fiercely together, till the giant, being thrust through the body, in his pain leaped over the bridge-side

and was drowned. Then King Triamour offered to give u kingdom to Sir Tristrem, who nevertheless would take nc except a beautiful dog named Peticrewe, a present for Ysonc

The fame of Tristrem's new exploit being noised abroad rea King Mark, who prayed him to return to Tintagel. So Tris came, and was received joyfully by Mark, who made him g steward of the realm and loaded him with honours.

But it was still as it had been before, and still Tristrem Ysonde thirsted each for the other. Their love departed neither for weal nor woe, through all their lives. Together were banished, after much long-suffering from the king. fled, Tristrem and Ysonde, into a wood, where, dwelling rocky cavern and living on venison which Tristrem took in chase, the two abode a twelvemonth save three weeks.

At length King Mark came hunting to the forest, and pee in at a cranny of the rock saw the face of golden-tressed Yso lit by a ray of sunshine as she slept, and by her side a n sword betwixt her and Sir Tristrem. Then from the toke the sword deeming them yet loyal to him, he stopped the cra with his glove and waited. Presently Tristrem rose up and Ysonde sleeping in the cave. Then King Mark spake kindly tenderly to him, and would again have been reconciled, would have brought him back to Tintagel. But Tristrem c not bear Mark's gentle words; and knowing all, dared no r go back to wrong the man that trusted him; but rather, b touched by Mark's great faith, sought how to tear himself a from Ysonde's sweet love, and so repay by sacrifice the undese confidence of the king. Wherefore Tristrem held his peace, went away alone among the old familiar trees where he Ysonde long had walked and loved. Bitterly he walked crushed the withered leaves beneath his heel, communing himself until he wrenched his mind round into this resolve— to go back, never to see her more, not to return to take one farewell, lest all his strength should fail him, but to leave sleeping and pass out into the world with no other keepsake Ysonde's gold ring which rested on his finger. And lest, in of him, his very feet should rise up in rebellion and carry hi her presence, he would cross the sea and never any more back. So resolved, he quickened his pace until he ran. footstep seemed as cruel as though his heart were under yet he sped on. So when Ysonde awoke, her knight wa away. Mark took her home to Tintagel; but Tristrem w firm set purpose, self-banished, took ship and came to S

Long he wandered there, a grave and solitary man, communing only with his harp, and plaining on its strings the woe that made his heart to bleed. And in those days Sir Tristrem made three lays, 'The Lay of Death,' 'The Song of Ysonde,' and 'The Lay of Love which dieth not.' Then, as a knight should do, he shut his grief within his heart and sought in battle for a refuge from his care.

In Spain he slew three giants; then, passing through Ermonie where Rohand's sons ruled as his vassals, he abode with them a little space and afterward came to Brittany. There he fought the battles of Duke Florentin until he rid him of his enemies, and so having gained favour with the duke, he was brought to the palace, where he dwelt for many months.

Duke Florentin had a daughter, passing fair and gentle, whom men called Ysonde of the White Hand. And as she sat in the palace, hearing Tristrem sing with wild passion the 'Song of Ysonde'—Ysonde the beautiful, Ysonde the fair—she thought that the song was in her praise, and that the music which woke love within her own breast was meant for her. So she went to the duke her father and besought to be given in marriage unto Tristrem. Wherefore the duke spake often with Tristrem about his daughter, praying him to wed with her and promising half the kingdom as a dower. But Tristrem long held his peace, or made excuse that he should never wed, until wearying of the duke's importunity, and feeling something of compassion for Ysonde of the White Hand, who seemed to pine for him as he did for Ysonde of Cornwall, and smitten moreover a little with her name, the name so dear to him, he yielded listlessly, and they were wed. But as they passed out from the church, now man and wife, the ring, the keepsake of the Queen Ysonde slipped from his finger to the pavement. Then his heart reproaching him with treachery, he thought on all she had suffered for his love, and was suffering now, away in Cornwall; wherefore he led his wife to his castle gate, and having appointed her a retinue and maintenance, he turned his horse and went away and dwelt in another part of the land, leaving Ysonde of the White Hand a maiden wife.

Near Tristrem's solitary home dwelt a savage giant, Beliagog, on whose lands none dare hunt; but Tristrem hunted there and defied the giant to come out and fight. Vainly did Beliagog hurl his long barbed darts at his strong foeman, for Tristrem closing with him cut off his foot, and made him go upon his knees and beg for mercy. Sir Tristrem bound him, as the price of sparing

his life, to build a lordly castle in honour of Queen Ysonde. So he made lame Beliagog labour at carrying great stones and heavy timber trunks. Then sent he to all parts for skilful workmen to rear the walls, and cunning carvers who could work in stone the image of all things that be. In the castle was a hall of traceried work wherein the life of Tristrem was portrayed in imagery. There one might see Ysonde and Brengwain, Mark and Meriadok, Rohand and Duke Morgan, Moraunt and Urgan—all so like that they seemed to breathe—with Tristrem harping to Ysonde, in court, in hall, in bower ; and everywhere was Ysonde, with Tristrem ever at her side. There Tristrem long dwelt, a lonely man, gazing upon the imagery and harping on his harp.

One day Ysonde of the White Hand, in speaking with her brother Ganhardin, betrayed by an unwitting word that her husband visited her not. Partly from shame and partly from hope to win him back, she had kept silence heretofore. Thereupon Ganhardin rode angrily off to Tristrem and demanded the reason of his neglect. Then spake Tristrem haughtily, 'Since your sister has betrayed the only secret that there was or ever could be betwixt us, I will never look upon her face again.' For he fretted at the empty marriage-bond, and gladly caught at an excuse to sunder it more widely. His own suffering made him cruel ; so he neither knew nor pitied the patient love which his wife bore to him. Then he led Ganhardin to his castle hall and showed the picture of Ysonde taking the cup from Brengwain's hand. 'See,' said he, 'how fair she is ; thrice fairer than your sister. Fair Ysonde, who art and must be while I live my only love!' And Ganhardin, seeing her beauty only in marble, had not another word to say, but speechless sat regarding the imagery, whilst Tristrem, musing, let his fingers stray upon the harp and played the 'Lay of Love which dieth not.'

Ganhardin sat as it were in a trance before the pictured image of Ysonde, until at last so greatly did he desire to gaze on her in life that he entreated Tristrem to take him to Cornwall so that he might see with his own eyes that her beauty was not overdrawn. Then Tristrem told the story of his love to Ganhardin, who the more entreated him to go to Britain, till, wavering with persuasion from his old resolve, he sailed with Ganhardin to Cornwall.

Now Ysonde was in great distress and trouble that Canados, the king's high constable, ever since Tistrem's absence, had importuned her with love, and now sought to carry her off by force of arms. Glad was the fair Ysonde when Ganhardin brought her Sir Tristrem's ring. And she and Brengwain went blithely

back with him to the wood and told Tristrem all their strait. But Canados, being apprised of their meeting, came with a great army, and Tristrem and Ganhardin finding it hopeless to do battle against so many, and not wishing Mark to hear of their arrival, fled, whilst the queen and Brengwain sought to escape to the palace. Canados overtook the queen at the palace gates, but fearing then to carry her off, came straight to the king and told how Tristrem was come back. Brengwain was very angry to think that Tristrem fled, nevertheless she told King Mark the reason why Canados was so hot against him, whereat the king being enraged at the presumption of his constable banished him straightway from the palace.

After this, that he might look upon Ysonde's dear face again, Sir Tristrem stained his cheeks and dyed his hair, and came to the palace dressed in a cap and bells, with a fool's wand in his hand, and went daily in and out as jester to the court. But Brengwain, who alone beside the queen knew him in this disguise, upbraided him continually with his flight from before his enemies. Then Tristrem openly in the court threw off his jester's dress, and desired a tournament to be proclaimed that he might clear the queen. Meriadok and Canados were challengers, and Tristrem and Ganhardin rode against them in the tourney, and after a bloody combat slew them both and put to rout the rest of the talebearers.

Then Tristrem sailed again for Brittany to the castle which Beliagog had made for him. And Ganhardin came home and told his sister all that he had seen. Ysonde of the White hand had long sought patiently to win her husband to her side, but when her brother told of the Belle Ysonde of Cornwall, hope died out from her breast, and in its place there came a steadfast jealousy, as patient as her love. The colour faded from her face, till that grew white like the fair hands wherefrom she took her name.

Now on a day, as Tristrem rode alone in the wood, he met a young knight named Tristrem like himself, who begged his help against a band of fifteen knights which had carried off his lady. Sir Tristrem rode after the party and attacked them on a lea beside the forest. His namesake fell in the fray; but Tristrem conquered all those knights and slew them without mercy to avenge his death. Nevertheless after the victory he lay down on the ground and fainted, for a poisoned arrow had smitten him on the old wound which he had received in battle with Morauntt. Men found him senseless in the wood, and bore him, not to his own castle but to the castle of Ysonde of the White Hand, which

happened to be near. Glad was she to get her lord, though wounded, underneath her roof. Day and night she watched him with a jealous tenderness, hungering for his love and seeking but a smile in payment of her care. It came not. In his pain he dreamed but of the Fair Ysonde, and in his wanderings raved her name.

The wound grew worse and cankered, and the poison spread. Tristrem lay near death's door. No leech could cure his wound. Only one living soul could save his life, and that was she for whom alone he thought it worth the saving—Ysonde of Cornwall, who knew her mother's art. Then he called Ganhardin secretly, and giving him Ysonde's ring to bear for a token, said, 'Take ship and hasten to her. Bid her come for her love's sake and heal me. Tell her, lest I see her not, that I have loved her always and her only.' Then his heart sank as he thought, 'Will she come, and will she be in time?' So he whispered to Ganhardin again, 'Death presses heavily upon me. Yet I crave to last till you come back. If only I could know that Ysonde came with you, though I lay at the very point of death and the ship were far away, so sweet would be the tidings I could not die till she were here. I pray you take two sails, one black, one white; and as you voyage homeward, if Ysonde be with you in the vessel hoist the white sail for a sign; if not, the black. So, as I lie here wearying for the ship, I may know the quicker if sweet Ysonde perchance has not forsaken me.' Then Ganhardin sped away to do his bidding.

But Ysonde of the White Hand had overheard every word that Tristrem spake to Ganhardin; and her heart grew very cold and pitiless. Gloomily she sat watching at the window for the ship to come. A little speck, far off upon the wide gray sea, grew nearer, and the vessel hove in sight,—with a glittering white sail filled full in the fair breeze, the rowers straining their brawny arms to gain the shore in time, and a woman standing in the prow impatient of their utmost speed. Well knew Ysonde of the White hand who it was. One little hour and she must give her husband, not yet hers, into another's arms to tend, and suffer lips more dear to press his cheek and soothe his pain, as hers had vainly hungered long to do.

Tristrem lay in light slumber, the breath coming fast and faint, but the murmurings of his wife roused him; and looking on her face he knew that the vessel was in sight. Painfully he lifted himself upon his bed and strove to move where he might see, but he had not strength.

'What sail, what sail?' he cried, all hoarse and flushed, and trembling betwixt hope and fear.

'Black, black!' she answered from her stone-cold lips.

Then shuddering with despair unspeakable to know himself forsaken of Ysonde, Tristrem covered up his face and fell back dead.

But the ship came to land, and Ysonde, springing to shore, scarce heeded them which told her of her lover's death, but came running to the castle, and up into the chamber where he lay, and where his wife mourned loudly for him.

'Away, woman,' cried the Fair Ysonde in a hushed, soft voice, with a grief too terrible for tears,—'away, and let me weep for him, for he is mine.' And none dared hinder her, for fear fell on them all for the greatness of her woe. Then falling on Tristrem's body she gathered it in her arms, crying, 'He is mine—he loved me, he is mine.'

So, like a wearied child, she sobbed herself to sleep upon her lover's breast. Neither did any disturb her more, for they knew her slumber was death-fast.

King Mark sent and fetched their bodies to Cornwall. A letter tied to the hilt of Tristrem's sword told the king the story of the love-potion and of the loves of Tristrem and Ysonde. Long mused he thereupon; and he wept, seeing the writing of his nephew and the sword that had set Cornwall free; and knowing all, King Mark forgave them freely. Together he laid them in a fair tomb within a chapel, tall, and rich in carven work; and above he set a statue of Ysonde, wrought skilfully in her very likeness as she lived. And from Sir Tristrem's grave there grew an eglantine which twined about the statue, a marvel for all men to see, and though three times they cut it down, it grew again, and ever wound its arms about the image of the fair Ysonde.

Bevis of Hamtoun.

Sir Guy, Earl of Hamtoun, took a young wife in his old age, the King of Scotland's daughter, by whom he had a son named Bevis. But his wife never loved him though he doted on her even to foolishness; nor did she wed Sir Guy of her own accord, but of her father's will, for she had long before given her heart to Divoun, Emperor of Almaine. Eight years she wearied of the earl's caresses, praying he might die; but life ran strong within the old man's veins. At last, tired of waiting longer for his death, she inveigled Sir Guy to go a-hunting in Hare Forest by the sea, and sent secretly to Divoun to come with a band of men and lie in ambush to slay him there.

Divoun, in his armour of proof, had pricked on before all his knights in Hare Forest, and so met Sir Guy alone, without either shield or armour, clad only in hunting dress and by his side a sword.

'Yield now, old greybeard,' said Divoun, 'and let it make death bitter to thee to know that I shall slay thy brat also, and take thy wife to be my leman.'

'Though I be old,' answered Sir Guy, 'and have no armour and no weapon but my sword, God helping me, I yet can fight for wife and child.' Furiously he rode against Divoun and turned his spear aside, grappled the man by great strength from his saddle, and flung him to the ground; then got off his steed, but scorned to smite the cowering emperor whining at his feet for pity. 'Fool,' said Sir Guy, 'you held an old man's strength too cheap.' Just then from out the brushwood came galloping a thousand knights to the succour of Divoun, and these hemmed in Sir Guy on either hand. Like some old lion at bay, he shook himself, and something of the old might came back into his limbs, and all the old courage to his heart. He broke their ranks on every side, and reaped among the men as does a reaper with his sickle; so they fell and bowed before his sword like ears of corn at harvest-time. So he reaped on, until he cut three hundred of them down, till his arm waxed weary of the slaughter, and he was overcome with faintness. Then only dared his enemies rush

in on him to bear him to the earth, and that same craven Emperor Divoun with his own hand smote off the noble white-haired head which never harboured an unkindly thought of knight or dame, nor plotted treachery.

Then Divoun wedded with the lady of Sir Guy, who brought him all the earl's possession for a dower. But the child Bevis, who was five years old, continually reproached his mother with her wickedness, charging her with his father's murder, insomuch that her very life became burdensome. Wherefore she sent to Saber, good knight and vassal of Sir Guy's, saying, 'Take away this brat and send me proof that he is dead, so I may live in peace.' Saber promised with a heavy heart, but had pity on the child for old Sir Guy's sake, who had been good to him; wherefore on getting home he took a boar and killed it, and having sprinkled the boy's garments with the blood, sent them to his mother; but Bevis he dressed in ragged clothes and sent him to the fields to tend the sheep.

One night, while herding the sheep upon the down, Bevis looked out towards his father's towers and saw the castle lighted up and heard the sound of tabours and of minstrelsy, and he was angry. He said within himself, 'I, the earl's son, in rags keep sheep—houseless in the bleak night, whilst the earl's murderers make merry with feasting and dances.' Then, taking his shepherd's crook in hand, he went to the castle, forced his way past the porter at the gate and marched gravely up the hall through all the dancing and the revelry, till he came to the bench where sat Divoun and his mother in state. 'What do you here, Divoun,' he cried, 'upon my lands and in my castle without leave? Base murderer and coward!' Then in sight of all he smote the emperor thrice with his crook upon the crown. But Divoun and his wife feared the boy, scarce knowing if it were not in truth his spirit, for they believed him dead. Neither did any that were in the hall lay hands on him, for many were his father's vassals, and the rest were struck with wonder seeing the grave demeanour of the child. So he passed out and came to Saber, telling what he had done. But Saber was very sorry, since now it was known that Bevis was alive it would be no longer easy to protect him from his mother's wrath. And so it fell out, for Saber had barely time to hide the boy behind the arras when his mother entered the house, demanding her son, and threatening Saber with loss of all his possessions if he failed to give him up. But Saber refused, since he feared for the boy's life. Then Bevis came out of his own accord from behind the arras, and stood

before her. 'Mother,' said he, 'Saber must not suffer for me, he has done you no wrong. I am here; do with me as you will.' Then she called without, and four knights entered. 'Take this child,' she said, 'and carry him down to the sea-shore—seek there for heathen merchants that sail far east, who will sell him for a slave among the Paynim:' and these men did her bidding.

The merchants who bought Bevis sailed to a distant country called Ermony, and because Bevis was a handsome and stalwart lad they made him a present to the king. The king's name was Ermyn, and his wife Morage had died, leaving him a little daughter, Josian, his only child; and she was very beautiful: her hair like a sunshine-dappled stream, eyes tender as forget-me-nots upon its brink, her snow-pure skin warm with the colour of her quick young blood. Now King Ermyn soon came to love Bevis as a son, for he was a handsome boy, and bold and free of speech; so he made him his page to have about him always in the palace; and he was Josian's playmate, till as the two grew on in years she waxed more shy, and Bevis awkward, and confused in his boy's love for her; whilst Ermyn, not ill-pleased, looked on and smiled at the pair. And when Bevis was fifteen years of age, and well grown in strength and beauty, the king said, 'Bevis, stay with me in Ermony; I have no heir but Josian, and when you both are grown I will give her you to wife, and you shall rule the country after me; only forsake the God of Christendom and bow before my lord Apollyon.' Then Bevis answered stoutly, 'Neither for gold nor silver, nor even for sweet Josian's love, will I forsake Christ that bought my soul so dear.' But Ermyn, himself a bold king, liked Bevis none the less for his steadfastness, so instead of flying into a rage he made the lad his chamberlain, and promised in due time to dub him knight.

One day, as Bevis rode out with fifteen Saracens, they began to rebuke him for taking pleasure on a day kept holy by the Christians, it being Christmas Day. But Bevis answered that dwelling for ten years among the heathen he had lost all account of time, and knew not what day it was. Then they reviled both him and his holy faith, whereon Bevis told them angrily that if he were but a knight and had a sword and lance he would joust with their whole company one by one for the honour of his God. At this the Saracens set on him all at once, pricking him with their swords, now here, now there, in savage sport as men bait a bull, till Bevis, smarting with the torment of his many wounds, rushed on them in a fury, and breaking a sword from out the first man's hand, struck down the Saracens to right and left,

cleaving some in their saddles, beheading some, and running others through hauberk and shirt of mail to the heart, until he found himself alone beside a heap of slain; and fifteen stray horses ran riderless back to their stables. Then Bevis rode home in great pain from his wounds and gat him to his chamber, where he lay down and swooned.

When King Ermyn heard of the slaughter of his knights he was very angry, and swore that Bevis should pay for it with his life. But Josian spake up for him, and prayed her father first to hear what Bevis had to say for himself. So Josian sent two knights to Bevis saying, 'Come to the palace and fear nothing, for I will make thy peace with the king.' Yet Bevis would not rise to speak with the knights. 'Away!' said he, 'you heathen dogs, before I slay you as I did your brother hounds; and tell you pagan mistress I have no message for her save that she is a heatheness and accursed of God and Christian men.' Howbeit Josian meekly received this hard message, saying only to her knights, 'Go back again and take me with you.' So she came to Bevis in his chamber and lifting up his head into her lap, kissed him on the lips and forehead, speaking gentle words; and so comforted and solaced him that all his care fled away. Then with ointments which she brought she anointed his wounds so that the blood staunched and the pain left them, and afterwards she brought him with her to King Ermyn. There in the court Bevis showed the wounds he had received, and told how the affray began; whereon King Ermyn prayed Josian to prepare the best chamber in the palace, and to nurse and tend him till he was well, for he said, 'I had rather lose all my treasure than such a doughty knight.' Now Josian being a skilful leech and cunning in herbs and physic, Bevis soon got well of his wounds, and became eager for some fresh battle.

In the king's forest was a great wild boar, so terrible and strong he tore men and dogs to pieces, and had slain many knights. But Bevis went against him with a spear and sword, and got the mastery of the flinty-hided swine, and cut off his head. He finished this battle about the time of evensong; then blowing on his horn the tokening, he walked back through the wood alone, bearing the boar's head aloft on the broken truncheon of his spear; but his sword he left in the swine's carcase. Now King Ermyn's steward, being jealous of his favour with the king, lay in wait for Bevis in the wood, with four and twenty knights and ten foresters, for he thought if he should now kill Bevis his death would be accounted to the boar. But Bevis fought with

his truncheon and the boar's head for shield, and quickly beat down the steward, whom he dragged from his horse and so gat his sword, the trustiest that ever man yet bare—its name, Morglay. And not one could stand against Bevis and Morglay, nor did he give them time to flee but slew them there, all four-and-thirty men. And Josian from her tower afar off saw the mighty deeds which Bevis did.

Three years after came King Brademond the Saracen with a great army to demand Josian in marriage, having heard the fame of her beauty. King Ermyn was in great strait how to defend himself, for his army was much smaller than Brademond's. But Josian told how Bevis single-handed slew the thirty-four men that came against him in the wood, and said, 'Make him a knight, that he may be my champion to defend my cause against King Brademond, for I wish no better man; and fear you not the number of the Saracen host, for Bevis is an army in himself.' So King Ermyn made Bevis kneel, and having dubbed him knight, appointed him to bear his banner into battle. Then the king gave him a shield, blazoned with three eagles azure and five silver sables on a golden field. Josian embroidered him the banner he should bear, and gave him also a hauberk of rare and curious work, worth many a town, and for a steed she gave him Arundel, the best and most faithful horse in all the world. With her own fair hands she armoured him and girt his good sword Morglay at his side. So he rode forth to lead King Ermyn's little host of five-and-forty thousand men to battle.

Then as Brademond came against him, with a giant for his standard-bearer called Redesoun leading the way, Sir Bevis smote Arundel with his golden spurs, and riding out before all the army, came down upon this grimly giant like a whirlwind, drave his spear through shield, hauberk, and mail, and smote his great carcase dead to earth. Then the armies closed. King Ermyn's knights did valiantly, but Bevis slew more than all the rest together, for the Saracens went down before his sword Morglay like grass before the scythe—so that by nightfall there was cause of mourning at Damascus for threescore-thousand men that never would return. As for Brademond, him Bevis overthrew, but spared his life on his promise to do homage every year to King Ermyn and pay him tribute; so gathering the remnant of his host together, the Saracen king went home again, too thankful to carry back his life to sadden after Josian any more.

Then Sir Bevis returned victorious to the palace of King

Ermyn, who straightway commanded Josian to disarm her knight, clothe him in a rich robe, and wait on him herself at table. So they made a great feast, and the king set Sir Bevis on high above all the lords of his court. And afterward, as Josian sat by Bevis on a bench, he moody and silent, she said: 'Hast thou not a word for me, Bevis? I have been very patient. I have waited for thy love till I am heart-sick, and I needs must speak. Not one little word? O! Bevis, if thou lov'st me not I needs must die: my heart will parch and wither in the drought like flowers that die for rain.' But he, though loving her as his life, yet feared to mate with one that served Mahound. 'Nay, Josian,' he answered bitterly, the while he rocked himself for very trouble of heart, 'nay, I have nought to speak. You have many wealthy suitors of your faith—there is Brademond. For me, I shall not wed.' 'O love,' cried Josian, 'I had rather have thee to my spouse though thou wert poor and evil spoken of by all mankind, than take a mate, less rich to me, who called the world his own. Sure thou dost love me, Bevis?' But he locked his hands together on his knees, and, without looking at her, said, ''Fore God I cannot love thee, Josian.' Then in sore distress she fell down at his feet and wept bitterly; but presently she stood up with scorn and anger in her tearful eyes: 'Go, you unmannered churl,' she said, 'go dig the ground and clip the hedges as a churl should do. I was a fool to waste my love on such as you, while princes, emperors, and kings would gladly bend to call me theirs. Despised, disdained of a churl, a common low-born churl!' 'Lady,' said Bevis, very cold and quiet, 'I am no churl! My father was both earl and knight of Britain, and Knight of Britain is a nobler rank than king of a few paltry heathen here in Ermony. I will go to my country. There is the horse you gave me, take it back; and your tawdry banner. I will have nothing that is yours. A churl! a churl!' So he rose and left her, that word rankling in his mind, and rode off into the town.

But when he was gone, Josian repented bitterly of having so becalled the fairest knight in all the land, and she sent Boniface, her own chamberlain, to hasten after him with this message;—Josian says, 'I am to blame, and I repent me sore of all I said, and humbly pray a word of kindness from my lord.'

But Bevis, fuming yet within his chamber, only said, 'There is no answer, tell your lady. Yet you may say the churl has paid you wages for your errand;' and he gave Boniface a mantle of white samite, gold-broidered; a present worthy of a king.

Thereupon Josian, very sad at heart, came herself to Bevis, and

entered the chamber where he lay feigning to sleep, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him, saying, 'O love, I come myself to make my peace, for I am all to blame. But speak a word to me.' Then he said, 'I am weary, let me lie, but go thou home.' 'Nay,' answered Josian, 'not until thou dost forgive me,' and she wept upon his breast. 'Bevis, for thee will I forsake my gods, and take thy God for mine, and thee for ever for my lord, so I may only follow thee throughout the world.' Then said Bevis, 'Now I can love thee without stint, dear Josian;' and he kissed her tenderly. So she departed with a blithe and happy heart.

There were two knights whom Bevis had rescued from beneath Brademond's sword in the battle, and these dwelt with him in the house, his guests; but they were envious of him and of his favour with the king, even as saith the old saw, 'Deliver a thief from the gallows, and he will never rest till he has hanged thee thereon.' So these two thankless fellows went privily to King Ermyn, and falsely swore that Sir Bevis had been guilty of foul wrong against his daughter Josian, when she visited him in his chamber; and cunningly prayed him to keep the matter secret for Josian's sake and her fair fame. King Ermyn was very wroth and very sad, yet said he, 'I cannot spill this traitor's blood myself, since he saved my life and lands and child from Brademond.' Then the two knights counselled him to write a letter to his vassal Brademond at Damascus, bidding him avenge the fault, which he would gladly do as the conquered rival of Sir Bevis, and to send the letter by the hand of Bevis himself. Wherefore the king sent for Bevis, and gave him a sealed letter to King Brademond, charging the knight on no account to break the seal or give the missive into other hands than Brademond's. Neither would he let him take his good horse Arundel nor his sword Morglay, saying that it befitted not a peaceful messenger to go upon his errand like a warrior. So Bevis rode off upon a common hack, unarmed, and all unknowing that he bare in his breast a letter warranting his death.

Now as he drew nigh Damascus, a palmer that sat beneath a tamarisk tree asked Bevis to partake his meal, and Bevis, nothing loth, consented, little witting that this palmer was no other than Saber's own son Terry, whom Saber had sent out to travel through all lands and find what had become of Bevis. After their meal the men began to talk. Terry told who he was, and how he sought a knight named Bevis who was sold among the Paynim when a child. 'For,' said he, 'my father Saber dwells now in a castle in the Isle of Wight, and every year claims this

boy's heritage from Divoun, and fain would find Bevis to help him gain his earldom from the usurper.'

But while Bevis mused whether he should reveal himself or no, the palmer espied the silken strings of a letter in Bevis's breast. 'Come,' said he, 'let me read your tidings, for I am a clerk, and many a man ere now has carried his own death-warrant for want of clerkship.' 'Aye,' Bevis answered, 'I was warned of this, lest any man should ask to read the message which I bear. But I have sworn that none save he to whom it is written shall break the seal, and I will answer for my promise with my life. As for this Bevis of whom you speak, I knew him some time since; he went among the Saracens and I rather think they hanged him to a tree, for he has not come back. It is vain to seek him further, for being his friend I certainly should have heard of him were he alive.' Then Terry returned to his father in the Isle of Wight, and told him that Bevis must have died among the Paynim; and Saber mourned much at the tidings.

When Bevis came into Damascus to King Brademond's palace, he was well nigh dazzled with its splendour. The doors and pillars were of shining brass, and many burnished pinnacles and minarets pierced the blue sky. The windows were of bronze and set with glass, the halls inlaid with gold and carven work. There was a deep moat round the palace, and a broad high bridge across the ditch with sixty bells which rang whenever man or beast passed across, and by the bridge end, a gold and azure tower whereon a golden eagle with big jewelled eyes gleamed and sparkled night and day. So Bevis came into the palace where Brademond sat at a banquet with twenty kings, and gave the letter into his hands, charging him straightly to obey King Ermyn's commands. When Brademond had read it, he said to the kings which sate at meat with him, 'This is Sir Bevis who made me vassal to his master: rise up therefore and greet him as is seemly.' And when they had arisen, Brademond took Bevis by both hands as though to welcome him, but in truth to hold him fast so that he should not draw his sword, and then cried to the kings, 'Quick, fall on him, and get him down.' So before Bevis knew of their treachery, they bore him to the pavement, and having bound him fast they cast him into a loathesome dungeon deep down underground, and full of noisome reptiles. There they loaded him with chains, and gave him bread and water for food. The snakes and serpents would soon have been his death, but that he found a broken staff in his dungeon, wherewith, chained as he was, he slew them. For seven years Bevis

remained a captive in this dark and dreadful prison-house, till his beard grew to his feet, and he lost the look of human kind.

Meanwhile, Josian, who mourned the sudden departure of her lover from Ermony, was told by her father that Bevis had returned to England to marry a wife of great estate. Yet did this true maid refuse to believe that Bevis had forsaken her, being sure in her mind that some secret treason was at work to keep him from her. Then came Ynor, King of Mombraunt, to seek her hand in marriage, and her father urged his suit; but Josian hated Ynor, loving Bevis only in her heart. Nevertheless, after two years' delay, King Ermyn insisted that she should wed at once with Ynor, and her tears and prayers being of no avail, she was married to him, and the wedding feast was held in Ermyn's palace. Now Josian had a ring of curious make (her mother gave it to her, and she got it from Merlin), and in this ring was a certain stone of such rare virtue that no man might have power upon the maid which wore it, save she willed. King Ynor rode off with his bride to Mombraunt, and men led Arundel beside him by the bridle-rein. But as he drew near home, Ynor thought to mount his horse and ride him in sight of Josian. No sooner did Arundel find a strange rider on his back instead of his own dear master, than he shook himself and tossed his head, and with a sudden quiver at his flanks, set off, swift as the wind, past city, over plain, through wood and field and river, over dyke and fence, and at the last threw Ynor down, and trampled the life near out of him, so that for a whole year thereafter Ynor lay sick and like to die. But Arundel with a mighty neigh of triumph cantered off to his stable at Mombraunt, where for five full years no man dared approach him, he was so fierce, and they had to lower his corn and water down by a rope from overhead.

Now after seven years, Sir Bevis in his dungeon on a day thus made his prayer aloud: 'O Heavenly King, which dwellest in the light, have pity on me buried here in this dark hole beneath the ground, knowing not night from day, and bring me out to see Thy sunshine once again, else shorten suddenly my days and let me die.' His jailors hearing him complain, bade him be quiet, for it was night, and they would sleep; and when he would not, but so much the more called out upon his God, one of them let himself down by a rope into the dungeon with a lamp and sword, and sought to strike him. But Bevis lifted his two chained hands and at one blow brake the man's skull. Then he cried to the jailor's fellow above, 'Come down quickly, for this man has a fit here with the foul air.' So the other came down by the rope,

and Bevis slew him also. His jailors being dead, he had no longer any food, and so for three days could do nothing but cry mightily to God : and on the third day, Jesus of his mercy brake his fetters and he stood up free, and joyfully gave thanks. Then climbing by the rope whereby the jailors had come down, Bevis reached the surface of the earth at midnight. He went into the castle, and the knights that guarded it being fast asleep, he took a spear and sword and coat of mail, then chose the best horse in the castle stable, saddled him and rode out to the castle gate. 'Awake !' he cried, to the porter, 'down with the drawbridge quickly, for Bevis has escaped and I am sent to take him.' So the sleepy porter let him pass, and Bevis rode five miles across the plain, till, stiff and sore with long captivity, he lay down on the grass to rest.

Early in the morning Bevis was missed at Damascus, and a great host of knights went out to search for him. Foremost of all came Sir Grander on a very fleet and famous horse called Trinchesis, for which he had paid its weight in silver. He far outrode the others and came upon Sir Bevis alone. But after a long battle Bevis, weak though he was with his long fasting, overcame Sir Grander and having cut off his head, leaped upon Trinchesis just as the rest of the Saracen knights came within sight, and rode until he came down to a rocky strand and saw the wild sea breaking on the beach. There, at his wit's end, with the sea before him and an army of pursuers behind, Sir Bevis lifted up his heart to Christ. 'O most sweet Jesu, Shepherd of the earth, within whose fold are all Thy works, it is a little thing for Thee, who makest creatures go upon the air and in the sea with wings and fins, to help me now.' So saying he leapt his horse into the brine and the waves upbore him bravely, and Trinchesis swam the whole day and half the night, and at length brought Bevis safe to land.

Almost starved with hunger Bevis went straight to the first castle he saw to ask a meal. But a giant lived there, brother to Sir Grander, who seeing a knight ride on his brother's steed Trinchesis, at once did battle with him, wounding Bevis on the shoulder with a javelin and killing Trinchesis with his club. Howbeit Sir Bevis brought the giant to his knees and smote his sword into his neck. Then, entering the castle, he appeased his hunger with a plentiful banquet which was in waiting for the dead giant, and having taken a horse from the giant's stable, rode off refreshed and strengthened. He soon met a knight from Ermony who told him all that had befallen Josian, how she was

King Ynor's wife, and Queen of Mombraunt, and how Arundel had served King Ynor. 'Would to God,' said Bevis, 'that Josian were as true to me as Arundel!' and so rode off to Mombraunt.

On his way, meeting a palmer he changed clothes with him, and gave the palmer his horse, thinking in this disguise more certainly to learn about Josian. There were many palmers about King Ynor's castle-gate, and Bevis being dressed as one of them, with scrip and wallet by his side and a crucifix at his girdle, asked what they did. They answered: 'The queen is good to palmers and gives them audience and entertainment every day at noon, if peradventure she may learn tidings of a good knight called Sir Bevis of South Hamtoun by the Sea.'

It was yet early in the day, and the king was gone a hunting; and as Bevis walked about the castle barbican he heard from a turret above the sound of weeping and complaint: 'O Bevis, dearly loved Knight of Hamtoun, how long must I pine before I hear of thee, only a little message or a word! Is thy God harder than Mahound, or can it be that thou art false, and must I die bewailing thee, my love?' When the queen came to the gate to talk with the palmers, Bevis waited till the last, and after the others were gone away the queen said, 'Palmer, in all your wanderings have you heard any speak of Bevis, a bold true knight who came from Hamtoun?' 'Yes,' answered Bevis, 'I have heard of him; in sooth I know him well. He had a good and faithful horse named Arundel, but lost it seven years since and sent me to travel and seek it. I am told you have it in your stable. Let me see the steed.' Josian marvelled much as she looked at the palmer, but did not know that it was Sir Bevis; so she called Boniface her chamberlain and took the palmer to the stable where Arundel was. But no sooner did Arundel hear his master's voice than he knew instantly who it was, and broke the seven-fold chain that bound him, tore down the stable with his hoofs, and leaping into the courtyard came and arched his neck in pride beneath his master's hand and neighed for very joy. Then he stood still nor moved a foot while Bevis saddled him and bridled him and mounted on his back. Then Josian knew also that it was Sir Bevis, and wept for joy, crying, 'Take not thy horse alone, dear knight, but take thy true and faithful love.' Bevis answered, 'Thou hast been five years a queen, and it is not fit that a Christian knight should take for wife any but an unwed maiden.' But Josian said, 'Love, take me with thee. Ask of all my maids, who have not left me since my marriage day, if ever I was wife to Ynor save in name. If it be not so, brand me with falsehood and turn me out upon the waste to die.'

Just then Boniface warned Sir Bevis that King Ynor was come back from hunting with a great retinue. So Boniface made Sir Bevis lead Arundel back to the stable and then go and place himself again at the castle gate in his palmer's weeds to wait for the king, and Boniface told him what to say.

So when the king, riding up to his gate, saw a palmer there, he asked what tidings there might be from foreign countries. Then said the palmer, 'I have travelled far in Tyre and Egypt and in Sicily, and been through many lands. And there is peace on all hands, sire, save where Syrak wars with Bradwin King of Dabilent and presses him hard within his last redoubt, a castle on a cliff, the which he cannot hold for many days.'

'Bradwin King of Dabilent is my own brother,' said Ynor, 'and I must go and succour him.' So he gathered together his army and his knights and straightway set off for Dabilent.

As soon as the king was fairly gone, Bevis threw off his palmer's dress, and having armed himself in mail and girded Morglay once more at his side, mounted his good steed Arundel and set off at night with Josian on her palfrey, Boniface also going with them, to make the best speed they could out of Mombraunt. And by journeying through forests and by-ways they managed to avoid pursuit, until, nightfall coming on, the queen took refuge in a rocky cave with Boniface for her protector, whilst Bevis went in search of food. But this cave was a lion's den, and soon the lions came home and quickly overmatched Boniface, whom they struck down, tore to pieces, and devoured. Yet after this the lions came to Josian and laid their heads down in her lap; for there is no ravenous beast will harm a maiden. Thus when Sir Bevis returned with some venison and saw the lions nestled against Josian he knew that she had spoken truth and had been true to him, and this made him so glad and valiant that he set upon the lions and cut off both their heads at one stroke of his sword Morglay, and so avenged the death of Boniface.

Next morning as they went on their way they fell in with a huge and mighty giant thirty feet in height, whose countenance was fierce and terrible. His eyebrows were a foot apart, his lips hung like a mastiff's from his great grim mouth, his body was bristled like a boar's, and he bare for a club the knotty trunk of an oak-tree. And this giant said his name was Ascapard, and that he came out from Mombraunt to bring back Josian.

Then Sir Bevis dressed his shield and rode furiously against the giant, and being more agile and nimble in his strokes

wounded him many times and yet avoided all the giant's blows And as Sir Bevis galloped by after driving his lance to the head in Ascapard's shoulder, the giant turned after him in the retreat with such a swinging stroke of his club, that, missing his aim, he was brought to ground with the force of it;—so Bevis leaped off his horse and was about to cut off the giant's head, when Josian interceded for him, saying, 'Spare his life, dear lord Sir Bevis—for since Boniface is dead we have no page; take him therefore for your squire and I will be bond for his faithfulness.' Then Ascapard sware homage and fealty to Bevis and Josian and became their squire.

Presently the three came to the sea-coast where was a vessel full of Saracens who refused to take Bevis on board. But Ascapard waded into the water, and having turned them all out of the ship, carried Bevis and Josian on board on their horses, one under each arm, and then drew up the heavy sail and steered the great paddle with one hand till he brought them safely to the harbour of Cologne. There Bevis found out Bishop Florentine, brother to Saber in the Isle of Wight, who made great joy at his arrival, and christened Josian at her wish in holy church. The good man would have christened Ascapard likewise and had a wine tun brought on purpose, but the giant leaped out again, saying it was only deep enough to christen half of him, and that he was of too ungodly size ever to make a Christian.

Now there was in a forest near Cologne a foul and fearsome dragon which killed much people. Whole companies of men that went against him were destroyed by the venom which this monster sweltered forth, so that it was said none but Saint Michael himself could contend against him. His front was hard as steel, eight tusks stood out from his mouth and he was maned like a steed. He was four-and-twenty feet from his shoulder to his tail, and his tail was sixteen feet long. His body was covered with scales hard as adamant, and his wings glistened like glass. The way in which the dragon came to Cologne was on this wise. Two kings fought in Cola and Calabria four-and-twenty years, and laid all the country waste, so that neither corn nor reapers were left in the land; nor would they ever make peace between themselves. And when these died in mortal sin they were still such fierce enemies that the Devil feared to have them in the fiery pit; so they became two fearful dragons which still ravaged Cola and Calabria till a holy hermit prayed both day and night to Christ to drive the dragons out and give the people peace. Then the dragons took their flight. One fled to Rome, but wax-

ing sick and helpless, as he hovered over the city, from the prayers which go up thence, fell into the river, where he still abides. The other fled through Tuscany and Provence to Cologne.

Then Sir Bevis determining to rid the country of this dreadful pest Ascapard said he would gladly go too, and all the way spake of what he would do to the dragon with his club so soon as they should hap upon him. Yet no sooner did this great giant hear the dragon roar like thunder in his den than he trembled and shook, and ran away as fast as he could into Cologne. But Bevis, with lion-like courage, rode against the dragon alone. All day long and through the night the champion fought, and oftentimes the dragon got him down, lashed him with his tail, and spouted rankling venom on him, or with his claws tare the good knight's shield and brake his armour. Bevis would have died from the poison of his wounds, but by good fortune there was hard by a Holy Well, blessed by a wandering virgin saint for cure of mortal sickness. Therein the dragon hurled him with a blow of his tail, so Bevis was made whole, and drinking of the water was refreshed, and assailed the dragon with such new vigour that he made the monster flee. But Bevis followed him and hacked his tail till the dragon turned on him again, and then he cut the apple of his throat in twain, whereon the dragon lay upon his side roaring mightily till Bevis, with three great strokes of Morglay, smote him to the heart. It took four-score blows and more to cut the dragon's head off. But Sir Bevis carved out the tongue, which was as much as he could carry on the truncheon of his spear, and set off to Cologne, where he found the people all at mass singing his dirge, for since he had been two days gone they gave him up for dead.

After this Bevis took ship for England to avenge his father's death upon Divoun, Emperor of Almaine. Bishop Florentine gave him a hundred knights to go with him, whilst Josian remained at Cologne in charge of Ascapard. Sir Bevis, having cast anchor within a mile of South Hamtoun, went on shore to Divoun's castle, and gave his name as Sir Gerard, a French knight, saying he had come over with a hundred companions in quest of service. Divoun said he should be very glad of their service, since he had an enemy named Saber dwelling in a castle in the Isle of Wight, who continually annoyed him by sending to claim the heritage of a young scapegrace named Bevis, an idle spendthrift, whose inheritance he had bought, whilst the good-for-nothing pickthank had squandered the money and gone

abroad. Bevis answered that he saw there was good cause for a quarrel, and therefore would willingly undertake it, provided Divoun would furnish his men with horses and armour, victual his ship, and send a hundred knights to go with him. 'Indeed,' said Bevis, 'we will promise not to lose sight of Saber till we have settled your quarrel.' Divoun readily agreed to these terms.

Now the ship being stored with provisions, and the horses and armour taken on board, Divoun's hundred knights set off to embark with Bevis and his company, going two and two, one of Bevis's men with one of Divoun's. But when they reached the ship's side each one of Bevis's men took his fellow and cast him overboard. Then they sailed off merrily with their shipload of the enemy's goods to Saber in the Wight. Saber welcomed Bevis with right goodwill, and at once began to prepare for battle. But Bevis sent a knight to Divoun with this message, 'I, that called myself Gerard, am no French knight, but Sir Bevis, Earl of South Hamtoun, and I claim my lands and heritage of thee, Divoun, and will wreak my father's murder on thy head.' Divoun was so angry at these words that he snatched the great knife from the banquet table and flung it at the messenger—him it passed by, but it smote Divoun's only son through the body that he died.

But while these things happened in England, Josian was in sore trouble at Cologne. For a certain earl Sir Milo plotted how he might carry her off, and since he could do nothing against her whilst Ascapard was by, he got a letter writ as though from Bevis, charging Ascapard to come quickly to his help, whereby the giant was beguiled to accompany some false messengers to a castle on an island far away, where they locked him in and left him. Then Sir Milo with a band of knights carried Josian off to his fortress, yet not before she had secretly sent a messenger to Sir Bevis to come to her aid. Howbeit, no sooner was Josian alone in a chamber with Sir Milo than she bespake him gently, and lulled him on her lap the while she made a slip-knot in her girdle. Therewith she strangled him and hanged him to the curtain rail. But Milo's knights, when late next day they found that the earl did not arise, brake down the chamber door, and seeing what was done, dragged Josian off into the market-place, tied her to a stake, and heaping faggots round about made a great fire, while she could only weep and pray in wanhope of ever seeing her dear lord again. But suddenly came galloping up on Arundel that good knight Sir Bevis. Right blithely

Arundel leaped through the fire, while Bevis cut the bonds that fastened his dear wife, and set her free. Then turning on the multitude in a fury that was terrible, Sir Bevis hewed them down with Mortglay as a woodcutter lops the green wood, whilst Ascapard, having broken out from the castle and swum to shore, came striding up in the midst of the fray, and he with his club and Bevis with his sword swept all the market-place till not another man remained to be slain. Then Bevis sailed again for Wight with Ascapard and Josian.

The Emperor of Almaine came and besieged Saber and Bevis in their castle in the Wight, his wife's father, the King of Scotland, also bringing his host to help him, with catapults and mangonels and arbalests. And when the stones and iron darts of these great engines shook the castle walls and bid fair to make a breach, Saber said to Bevis, 'We will divide our knights into companies, and make three sallies. I will head the first, you lead the second, and Ascapard shall bring out the third. Truly this host at present is too big to be fought with until we thin them down to fairer odds.'

Then Saber rode out and bore down first Sir Maurice of Mountclere, and afterward made great havoc of the enemy, for despite his age and his white hairs he was a brave and valiant man. Next, Bevis with his company came forth, but he would fight with none save Divoun, and cutting his way to where he was he bore him from his horse with a mighty shock, and would have smitten off his head with Morglay; but the host, ten thousand strong, closed round him, and having dragged the emperor from beneath his hand, beset him and his knights so furiously they were hard put to it for their lives. But Ascapard, with his ragly club, came beating down horse and man on all sides, and so cleared a passage for his company through the host to come and rescue Bevis, and there was no armour that could stand against Ascapard's great tree-trunk. He smote the King of Scotland dead at a blow, and this was the only time he killed but one man at a stroke, for he swung his club round in a sweep full sixty feet and mowed down everything within it, knight and steed alike. Then Bevis said to his squire: 'Mark well the Emperor Divoun,—him that rides yonder on the white horse. Take him alive and I shall well reward you.' Thereupon Ascapard strode through the host, and lifting Divoun out from his saddle carried him bodily into the castle. Meantime Sir Bevis and Saber fought the discomfited host till they scarce left a soul alive to tell the tale of that defeat. After this they returned to the

castle and threw Divoun into a cauldron of boiling pitch and brimstone; and Divoun's wife, hearing of her husband's shameful death, cast herself down headlong from her castle tower and brake her neck.

Then Sir Bevis went to Hamtoun and took possession of his heritage, and made a great feast in Hamtoun Castle, whereat all the lords of the shire came and did him homage as the rightful Earl of Hamtoun, their true ruler. And from that time he displayed upon his shield the three roses of Hamtoun in place of the five silver sables. After this Sir Bevis went to London to King Edgar and paid his fealty. And Edgar made him marshal of his army. And about Whitsuntide when a great race was run before the king for a thousand pieces of gold, Sir Bevis came on Arundel, late to the course, long after the rest had started; but he shook the bridle loose, saying, 'Speed thee, Arundel, and win the prize, and I will rear a lordly castle to thy praise,' and Arundel, for his master's sake, urged to the utmost, put forth all his strength, and sped past all the rest and won the race. With the treasure Bevis, in honour of his noble steed, built Arundel Castle, which stands unto this day. But the king's son coveted the horse, and after vainly teasing Bevis to give it him, came one night to the stable where Arundel was, to steal him away; but Arundel with one hind hoof dashed out his brains. Wherefore, for this, King Edgar would have had the horse slain, only Sir Bevis, rather than lose his faithful steed, chose to leave the country; so having made Terry, Saber's son, his squire, he again took ship with Josian and sailed for Ermony.

Now Ascapard was a poor man and gat but little reward of Bevis. He was also jealous that Terry should be made squire in his stead. Wherefore when Bevis was gone he set off to King Ynor at Mombraunt, and said, 'Make me a prince and ruler in your country, and I will slay Bevis and deliver Josian into your hand.' Ynor, very glad to think of getting back his queen again, agreed joyfully, and gave him forty knights clad in iron mail; for the giant said plainly that he would not undertake the matter by himself.

Now Sir Bevis and Terry rode with Josian through a lonely forest in Normandy; and in this forest, while they were gone for a little while, she gave birth to two boys, and almost directly afterwards Ascapard and his forty Saracens came and carried her off. Bevis on his return was so much overcome by grief when he could not find his wife, that he swooned away. On his recovery he took the two babes, and dividing with his sword

Josian's ermine mantle whereon they lay, wrapped them in it, and rode on till he met a forester, to whom he gave ten marks to bring up one of the children and call it Guy. Shortly meeting a fisher, he gave him the other child and ten marks, after christening the boy Miles over against the church stile, before the handle of his sword for crucifix.

But Josian was carried off to King Ynor, who, when he saw her, marvelled greatly, saying, 'This is not Josian that was my queen'—for she had eaten secretly of a certain herb whereby her countenance was changed into loathliness. So he said, 'Take her away, for I cannot abide so foul a visaged dame.' And he made Ascapard take her to a castle on a plain five miles away, where Josian dwelt for half-a-year alone with Ascapard for warder.

Now Saber had a dream in his castle in the Wight. He dreamed he saw Sir Bevis wounded to the heart, and waking, asked his wife to read the dream. Then said she, 'How should Sir Bevis seem stricken to the heart save he had lost his wife or child?' Saber therefore chose twelve trusty and valiant men, and having armed them well in mail of proof and clad them over all in palmer's weeds, took ship and sailed through the Greek Sea till he came by good fortune to the very land where Josian was held in captivity by Ascapard. And the lady looked out from her tower and besought his help. So Saber called the giant out to fight. Now Saber and his men, having seen Ascapard in battle, knew well how to assail him. So they ran close in upon the giant where he could not use his club upon them, and hewed off his feet until they brought him down and slew him with their swords. Nevertheless Ascapard, after he was on the ground, slew all the men that went with Saber, so that he alone escaped. Thus Saber brought Josian out of her captivity in the castle, and she made a cunning ointment which brought back her beauty, and having dressed herself in poor attire, set out on foot with Saber to seek Bevis. But Saber, being old, fell sick in Greece, and for a year lay ill upon his bed, whilst Josian tended him and earned the food for both by singing and playing on a cittern, for she was skilled in minstrelsy.

Sir Bevis meantime came to a country where a great tournament was held for the hand of a princess, the king's daughter, and this he won for knighthood's sake, and after him Terry was the most valiant knight. But the princess fell in love with Bevis, until, hearing he was already wed, she prayed him to be her bachelor for seven years, then if his wife returned she would wed Terry; if not, she would take Bevis for her husband. So Bevis

dwelt in a castle in that country and fought the battles of the king, and Terry was made steward of the realm.

After seven years' wanderings Saber and Josian came into the land where Bevis was; and footsore and weary Saber left her at an inn while he went to the castle to beg a bit of bread. Terry came down to the castle gate but did not know his father in his beggar's dress, all travel-worn, and very greatly aged by sickness. But Saber knew his son. 'Good steward,' said he, 'for love of the dear Rood, give me a little piece of bread.' 'Aye, palmer,' answered Terry, 'that I will, for my dear father's sake, who may be wandering as you are now. I know not where he is. Pray God be kind to him.' 'Son,' Saber said, 'thy father it is that blesses thee. Son Terry, my dear son.' Then Terry knew him, and reverently kissed his long white beard, and brought him in and served him joyfully and humbly at the table. As for Josian, she was clothed in fair apparel, and brought to Sir Bevis decked as a queen; nor were ever lovers more glad to be wed than were these two to meet again. And while they smiled and wept for joy together, the fisher and the forester came in and brought her children, hale, comely boys, who rode in mimic jousts to show their mother how strong they were. So the princess, the lady of the tournament which Bevis won, wedded with Terry. And all made great joy, for it would be hard to say which was the happier, Terry with his fair new bride and his father restored to him, or Bevis at finding his dearly-loved Josian again; yet do they say that love grows riper after age and storm, like old wine that has passed the seas.

Soon afterwards Sir Bevis went with his retinue of knights to Ermony. King Ynor, hearing this, gathered together the greatest army he could muster, and came against him to demand Josian his queen. But after a parley they agreed to determine the matter by single combat, the victor to be king both of Ermony and Mombraunt.

They fought on an island in view of both armies, where none could interfere. From prime till undern the air resounded with the ringing of their armour and the clashing of their swords. At high noon Ynor hewed off crest and circle and the visor bars from Sir Bevis's helmet; furious whereat Sir Bevis cleft King Ynor's shoulder half a foot through mail and breast-plate, forcing him to ground upon his knee; then, mad to see his blood upon the sword blade of his enemy, Ynor started up, and rushing on Bevis like a lion, clave his shield in two and raised his right arm for a fearful stroke, which Bevis, shieldless, could not ward; but he, wieldin

Morglay in both hands, lopped off the arm before it could deal the blow, so it fell helpless to the earth, with fingers still clenched on the weapon. Then Bevis threw him to the ground, unlaced the Paynim's helm and smote his head off. The Saracens, seeing their champion fallen, took flight; but Bevis, with his sons Sir Miles and Guy, and Saber and Terry with King Ermyn's army, pursued and slew great numbers in the way, until they came to Mombraunt. There Sir Bevis was crowned king and Josian for the second time made queen of that city.

But there came messengers from England with tidings how King Edgar had taken the estates both of Bevis and Saber, and bestowed them on Sir Bryant of Cornwall, his steward. Wherefore, Bevis sailed for Hamtoun with a great array of knights, and men-at-arms, and marched to Potenhithe, where he encamped. Then with twelve knights he came to the king at Westminster and asked that his estates might be restored. King Edgar, who dreaded nothing so much as war, consented; so Bevis went away with his knights to a tavern in London City to refresh himself. Yet no sooner was he gone than the steward, to whom the lands and castles had been given, reminded the king how Bevis was an outlaw, and how his horse Arundel had killed the prince. So it befell that proclamation was made in London to close the city gates, and stretch chains across all narrow streets, while all good citizens were called upon to arm themselves and take the outlaw alive or dead.

Now when Sir Bevis in the tavern found himself beset, he armed himself, girt on Morglay, and having mounted Arundel, rode out with his knights into the crowd, and first seeing Sir Bryant the king's steward urging on the people, he spurred against him, and with his lance bore down the backbiter dead upon the roadway. But the street was narrow, and Bevis, being beleaguered by a very great armed multitude, turned his horse down God's Lane, thinking to come out in Chepe, where he would have more space to fight. Now this lane was so narrow that he could not turn his horse therein, and when he came down to the end he found huge chains across which barred his way, whilst all the crowd swarmed in and quickly chained up the other end, so there was no escape. Thus were they caught in a trap, and the people with their swords, and stones, and bludgeons, slew all his twelve knights; and Bevis was hard put to it to hold his life but for a short space longer, since he could not turn, nor scarcely swing his sword within that narrow lane. Almost despairing, he prayed Christ to bring him out of this great peril so he might see his wife

and children once again. Then with Morglay he smote the chains and they fell in pieces on the pavement, so he came out in Chepe, the people shouting after him, 'Yield thee, Sir Bevis, yield thee, for we shall quickly have thee down.' But he answered proudly, 'Yea, I yield to God that sits above in Trinity, but to none else.'

New crowds poured into Chepe on all hands, and with pikes and javelins assailed this valiant knight through half the day; yet none could take him, for Arundel fought with a leal heart, and cleared the ground for forty foot to front and rear with his hoofs, the while his master cut down men on either hand far quicker than a parson and his clerk could shrive. By eventide he slew five thousand of the folk, until his arm waxed weary and he faint for need of food and parched with thirst. Then came a Lombard with a heavy mansel and smote him on the helm a blow that nearly stunned him, so that Sir Bevis leaned forward on his saddle-bow and seemed like to fall. Just then a cry was made, for lo, Sir Guy and Sir Miles with all their army, having burned the city gates, came riding into Chepe. Sir Guy cut down the Lombard, whilst Sir Bevis, gaining fresh nerve and vigour from this welcome succour, turned again and headed his army in battle against the Londoners, fighting far on into the night, until the Thames ran red with blood past Westminster, and sixty thousand Londoners were slain. Thus Sir Bevis took the city, and brought Josian to the Leden Hall, where they held feasting fourteen nights, keeping open court for all folk that would come.

Then King Edgar, earnestly desiring peace, made a treaty with Sir Bevis, and gave his only daughter to Sir Miles to be his wife; and these were wed at Nottingham amid great rejoicing as at the crowning of a king.

Sir Bevis then gave his earldom of South Hamtoun to Saber, and came by ship with Guy and Terry to Ermony. King Ermyn, being very old and near to death, took the crown from off his head and placed it on Sir Guy's. So leaving his son King of Ermony, Sir Bevis made Terry King of Ambersh, and then returned with Josian his queen to his own kingdom of Mombraunt. There they dwelt together in love for three-and thirty years, and made all the land Christian.

Now at the last Josian the queen fell sick of a mortal sickness, and knowing her end was near, she sent for Sir Guy to bid him farewell. And while she talked alone with her son, Bevis walked sorrowing about the castle till he came to the stable where Arundel was kept. There going in, he stroked and smoothed his old and faithful steed, and Arundel arched himself for the last

time beneath his master's hand, then looked up in his face and fell down dead. Then with a heavy heart Sir Bevis came back again to the chamber where Josian lay a-dying, and falling down beside her, took her in his arms and held her to him till she died; and before her body had grown cold, his soul went to her. So they passed together from the noise of the world and were nevermore divided.

But Sir Guy would not in anywise suffer them to be buried in the earth; wherefore he reared a noble church to Saint Lawrence, and made therein a fair chapel of white marble adorned with heraldry and carven work, all pictured with great deeds of knighthood for the Holy Cross and faithful love of wedded folk. There he made the bier, of marble and of gold, beneath a golden canopy, high-cornered, wrought with curious device, and laid them there: and built withal a house where pious monks sang masses morn and eve for the rest of good Sir Bevis and fair Josian. God's pity on their souls! Aye, and also upon Arundel, if indeed it be not unlawful to pray for a horse more faithful than most men, and truer than most friends.

Guy of Warwick.

Of all the nobles of Britain none was so strong as Rohand, Earl of Warwick, Rockingham, and Oxford. He made just laws, and made them be obeyed; nor king nor baron in the land could buy his favour with fine words or gold, or shield the wrong-doer from his punishment. Passing fair was Felice, his daughter, like some stately marble shaft of perfect mould; haughty was she as the great gerfalcon which spurns the earth and towers up into the noon to look the burning sun in the face. Wise masters, hoar with learning, came out from Thoulouse to teach her the seven arts and sciences, until there was not her like for wisdom anywhere.

Earl Rohand had a favourite page, named Guy, son of his just and upright steward, Segard of Wallingford: a brave and fearless youth, of strong and well-knit frame, whom Heraud of Ardenne, his tutor, taught betimes to joust with lance and sword, and how to hunt with hawk and hound by wood and river side.

It was the feast of Pentecost, when by old custom every maiden chose her love and every knight his leman. Guy, clad in a new silken dress, being made cup-bearer at the banquet table, saw for the first time the beautiful Felice, as kneeling, he offered the golden ewer and basin and damask napkin to wash her finger-tips before the banquet. Thenceforward he became so love-stricken with her beauty that he heard not the music of the glee-men, saw neither games nor tourneys, but dured in a dream, like one crazed, all through the fourteen days festival. Knights and fair dames praised his handsome figure and well-grown sinewy limbs; he heeded not—but once Felice gave him a courteous word as he offered her the wine-cup; he blushed and stammered and spilled the wine, and was rebuked for awkwardness.

The feast being over, Guy went away to his chamber, and there fell into a great love-sickness. Hopeless it seemed for a vassal to love one so far above him as his sovereign's daughter; so he gave himself up to despair, and his disease grew so sore that the most skilful leeches of Earl Rohand's court were unable to cure his

complaint. In vain they let him of blood or gave him salve or potion. There is no medicine of any avail,' the leeches said. Guy murmured, 'Felice: if one might find and bring Felice to me, I yet might live.' 'Felice?' the leeches said among themselves, and shook their heads, 'it is not in the herbal. Felice? Felix? No, there is no plant of that name.'

'No herb is Felice,' sighing answered Guy, 'but a flower—the fairest flower.'

'He is light-headed,' they said. 'The flower Felice? He seeks perchance the flower of happiness, growing in the garden of the blessed, away in Paradise. He is surely near his end.'

'It is truly Paradise where Felice is,' Guy answered.

'You hear? You see?' the leeches whispered one to another. 'Come, let us go; for we can be of no more good.'

Night came, and being left alone Guy thought to rise up from his bed and drag himself into the presence of his mistress, there to die at her feet. So weak was he become, he scarce could stand, but fainted many times upon the way.

Now Felice had heard many whisperings how Guy was dying for love of her, since her handmaidens had compassion on the youth, and sought to turn her heart towards him; but Felice was in no mind to have a page for a lover. Howbeit on this very night she had a dream, wherein being straitly enjoined to entreat the youth with kindness as the only way to save a life which would hereafter be of great service to the world, she arose and came to a bower in the garden where Guy lay swooning on the floor. Felice would not stoop to help him, but her maids having restored him to his senses, Guy fell at her feet and poured out all his love before her. Never a word answered Felice, but stood calmly regarding him with haughty coldness. Then said one of her maids, 'O lady! were I the richest king's daughter in the land, I could not turn away from love so strong and true.' Felice rebuked her, saying, 'Could not? Silly child, see that your soft heart do not prove your shame.' So with a tingling cheek the maid withdrew abashed. Then said Felice to Guy, 'Why kneel there weeping like a girl? Get up, and show if there is the making of a man in you. Hear what I have to say. The swan mates not with the swallow, and I will never wed beneath me. Prove that your love is not presumption. Show yourself my peer. For I could love a brave and valiant knight before whose spear men bowed as to a king, nor would I ask his parentage, prouder far to know that my children took their nobleness from a self-made nobleman. But a weeping, love-sick

page! No! Go, fight and battle—show me something that you do that I can love. Meantime I look for such a lover, and I care not if his name be Guy the page.'

Then Guy took heart and said, 'Lady, I ask no better boon than to have you for witness of what love for you can do.'

Felice answered, 'Deeds, not words. Be strong and valiant. I will watch and I will wait.'

Then Guy took leave of his mistress and in the course of a few days regained his health, to the surprise of all the court, but more especially of the leeches who had given him over for dead, and coming to Earl Rohand, intreated him to make him a knight. To this Earl Rohand having agreed, Guy was knighted at the next feast of Holy Trinity with a dubbing worthy a king's son; and they brought him rich armour, and a good sword and spear and shield, and a noble steed with costly trappings, together with rich silken cloaks and mantles fur-trimmed, and of great price. Then bidding farewell to Segard his father, Sir Guy left Warwick with Heraud his tutor, and Sir Thorold and Sir Urry for company, and having reached the nearest seaport, set sail for Normandy in search of adventures wherein to prove his valour.

They came to Rouen, and whilst they tarried at an inn a tournament was proclaimed in honour of the fair Blancheflor, daughter to Regnier, Emperor of Germany, and the prize was the hand of the princess, a white horse, two white hounds, and a white falcon. So Sir Guy and his companions rode into the lists, where was a great company of proven knights and champions. Three days they tourneyed, but none could withstand Sir Guy's strong arm. He overthrew Otho Duke of Pavia, Sir Garie the Emperor's son, Reignier Duke of Sessoyne, the Duke of Lowayne, and many more, till not a man was left who dared encounter him; and being master of the field, he was adjudged the prize. The horse and hounds and falcon he sent by two messengers to Felice in England as trophies of his valour. Then he knelt before the beautiful princess Blancheflor and said, 'Lady, I battle in honour of my mistress, the peerless Felice, and am her servant,' whereat the emperor and his daughter, admiring his constancy, loaded him with rich presents and allowed him to depart.

Sir Guy then travelled through Spain, Lombardy, and Almayne, into far lands; and wheresoever a tournament was held, there he went and jousted, coming out victor from them all; till the fame of his exploits spread over Christendom. So a year passed, and he returned to England unconquered, and renowned as the most valiant knight of his time. A while he sojourned in London

with King Athelstan, who rejoiced to do him honour: then he came to Warwick, where he received from Earl Rohand a princely welcome. Then Sir Guy hastened to Felice.

'Fair mistress,' said he, 'have I now won your love? You have heard my deeds, how I have travelled all through Christendom, and have yet found no man stand against my spear. I have been faithful in my love, Felice, as well as strong in fight. I might have wedded with the best. Kings' daughters and princesses were prizes in the tournaments; but I had no mind for any prize but thee. Say, is it mine, sweet mistress?'

Then Felice kissed her knight and answered, 'Right nobly have you won my love and worship, brave Sir Guy. You are more than my peer; you are become my sovereign; and my love pays willing homage to its lord. But for this same cause I will not wed you yet. I will not have men point at me and say, "There is a woman who, for selfish love's sake, wedded the knight of most renown in Christendom ere yet he did his bravest deeds—drew him from his level to her own—made him lay by his sword and spear for the slothful pleasures of a wedded life, and dwarfed a brave man down to a soft gentleman." Nay, dear one, I can wait, and very proudly, knowing myself your chiefest prize. But seek not to possess the prize too soon, lest your strivings for renown, being aimless, should wax feeble. It is because I love you that I hold your fame far dearer than my love. Go rather forth again, travel through heathen lands, defend the weak against the strong; go, battle for the right, show yourself the matchless knight you are; and God and my love go with thee.'

Then Sir Guy gat him ready for his new quest. Earl Rohand tried to persuade him to remain at home, as likewise did his father Segard; and his mother, weeping, prayed him stay. She said, 'Another year it may not fare so well with thee, my son. Leave well alone. Felice is cold and proud, and cares not for thee, else she would not risk thy life again. What is it to her? If thou wert slain she would get another lover; we have no more sons.'

Yet would not Sir Guy be turned from his purpose, but embarked with his companions, Sir Heraud, Sir Thorold, and Sir Urry, for Flanders. Thence he rode through Spain, Germany, and Lombardy, and bore away the prize at every tournament. But coming into Italy, he got a bad wound jousting at Beneventum, which greatly weakened him.

Duke Otho of Pavia, whom Sir Guy overthrew in his first

tournament at Rouen, thought now to be avenged on him. So he set a chosen knight, Earl Lombard, with fifteen other knights, to lie in ambush in a wood and slay Sir Guy; and as Sir Guy, with his three companions, came ambling slowly through the wood, he smarting and well-nigh faint with his wound, the men in ambush broke out from their concealment and called on him to yield. The danger made him forget his pain, and straightway he dressed his shield and spurred among them.

Sir Heraud, Sir Thorold, and Sir Urry killed the three first knights they rode against. Then Earl Lombard slew Sir Urry; and at the same time Hugo, nephew to Duke Otho, laid Sir Thorold dead at his horse's feet. Then only Sir Guy and Sir Heraud being left to fight, Sir Guy attacked Earl Lombard and smote him to the heart, whilst Sir Heraud chased Hugo, fleeing like a hound, and drave his spear throughout his body. Thus were Sir Urry and Sir Thorold avenged. But one of the felon knights, called Sir Gunter, smote Sir Heraud a mighty stroke when he was off his guard, and hewed his shield and coat of mail in pieces, and Sir Heraud fell to the earth covered with blood and lay as dead.

Thereupon Sir Guy's anger waxed furious at his master's death; and he spurred his horse so that fire rose from under its feet, and with one blow of his sword cleft Sir Gunter from his helmet to the pummel of his saddle. As for the other knights he slew them all except Sir Guichard, who fled on his swift steed to Pavia, and got back to Duke Otho.

Heavily Sir Guy grieved for the loss of his three friends, but most of all for his dear master, Sir Heraud. He sought about the wood until he found a hermit. To him he gave a good steed, charging him to bury the bodies of Sir Urry and Sir Thorold. From Sir Heraud's body he would not part. Lifting the old knight in his arms, he laid him across his horse, and led the steed by the bridle-rein till they came to an abbey, where he left the body with the abbot, promising rich presents in return for giving it sumptuous burial with masses and chants. But Sir Guy departed and hid himself in a hermit's cave away from the malice of Duke Otho, until his wound should be healed.

Now there was in the abbey whither Heraud's body was taken, a monk well skilled in leech-craft, who knew the virtues of all manner of grasses and herbs. And this monk, finding by his craft that life still flickered in the body, nursed and tended it; and after a long while Sir Heraud was well enough to travel. Disguised as a palmer he came into Burgundy, and there, to his

great joy, found Sir Guy, who had come thither meaning to take his way back to England. But they lingered still, till Heraud should grow stronger, and so it fell out that they came to St Omers. There they heard how the Emperor Regnier had come up against Segwin, Duke of Lavayne, laid waste his land, and besieged him in his strong city Seysone, because he had slain Sadoc, the emperor's cousin, in a tournament. But when Sir Guy learned that Sadoc had first provoked Duke Segwin, and brought his death upon himself, he determined to help Segwin against his sovereign the Emperor Regnier. He therefore gathered fifty knights together with Heraud, and coming secretly at night to the city of Seysone, was let in at a postern gate without the enemy being aware. In the morning after mass they made a sally against their foes, which numbered thirty thousand strong, and routed them, taking many noble prisoners. Three times the emperor came against the Greeks, each time with a new army larger than before. Twice did Sir Guy vanquish the host, and drive them from the walls. The third time he took Sir Gaire, the emperor's son, prisoner, and carried him into the city. Then the Emperor Regnier determined, since he could not take the place by assault, to beleaguer it, and starve the town into surrender. And it was so that, while his army was set down before the walls, the emperor hunted alone in a wood hard by, and Sir Guy, meeting him there, gathered a branch of olive tree, and came bending to the emperor, saying, 'God save you, gentle sire. Duke Segwin sendeth me to make his peace with you. He will yield you all his lands and castles in burg and city, and hold them of you henceforth in vassalage, but he now would have your presence in the city to a feast.' So the emperor was forced to go with him into the city as a prisoner, albeit he was served with the humility due to a sovereign both by Sir Guy and Duke Segwin's knights. Sir Gaire and the other captive nobles came also and prayed for peace with Duke Segwin, for they had been so well treated that they felt nothing but the truest friendship for their captor. So it befell when the emperor found himself feasting in the enemy's castle, surrounded by the flower of his own knights and nobles, and Duke Segwin and his band serving them humbly at table as though they had been servants in place of masters, he was touched by their generosity, and willingly agreed to a free and friendly peace. And this was celebrated by the emperor giving Duke Segwin his niece to wife, whilst the Duke of Saxony wedded Duke Segwin's sister amid great rejoicings.

Now after this, learning that Ernis, Emperor of Greece, was besieged in Constantinople his capital by the Saracens, Sir Guy levied an army of a thousand knights and went to his assistance. Well pleased was Ernis at so timely a succour, and he promised to reward Sir Guy by making him heir to the throne and giving him the hand of his only daughter the beautiful Loret. Then Sir Guy led the army forth from the city against the Soudan and his host, and defeated them so badly that for some days they were unable to rally their men for another encounter.

In the meantime one of Sir Guy's knights named Sir Morgadour fell in love with the Princess Loret, and being envious of Sir Guy's achievements as well as jealous of such a rival, he sought how to embroil him with the emperor and compass his disgrace. Wherefore one day when the Emperor Ernis was gone a-rivering with his hawks, Sir Morgadour challenged Sir Guy to play a game of chess in the Princess Loret's chamber. They played there, Sir Guy not thinking of treachery. But by-and-by the princess entered, and Sir Morgadour after greeting her took his leave quickly and came to the Emperor Ernis, telling him how Sir Guy was alone in the chamber with his daughter. Ernis, however, paid little heed to the tale, for he said—'Well, and what of it? Loret is his promised bride, and Sir Guy is a good true knight. Away with your tales!' But Sir Morgadour was not to be baffled, so he went to Sir Guy, and said—'Behold how little trust is to be placed in a king! Here is the Emperor Ernis mad wroth to hear you were alone with the Princess Loret, and swears he will have your life.' Then Sir Guy in great anger summoned his knights, and was going over to the Saracens, when, on his way, he met the emperor, who told him of the malice of Sir Morgadour and all was made plain.

But now the Saracens coming anew against the city, Sir Guy went forth to meet them with many engines upon wheels which threw great stones quarried from a hill. Sir Guy and his army again defeated the Saracens, insomuch that a space of fifteen acres was covered so thick with dead that a man might not walk between, whilst the pile of slain around Sir Guy reached breast high. So the Soudan and his host withdrew to their camps.

Then Sir Morgadour bethought him of another wile. The Soudan had sworn to kill every Christian found in his camp, without regard to flag of truce or ambassage. So Sir Morgadour persuaded Ernis to send Sir Guy to the Soudan saying, that, since the war seemed likely to come to no speedy issue, it should be settled by single combat between two champions chosen from the

Christian and the Saracen hosts. The counsel seemed good to Ernis, but yet he liked not to risk his son-in-law's life; wherefore he called his Parliament together and asked for some bold knight to go and bear this message. When all the others held their peace, Sir Guy demanded to be sent upon the business, neither could the prayers and entreaties of Ernis cause him to forego the enterprise. He clad himself in iron hose and a trusty hauberk, set a helm of steel, gold-circled, on his head, and having girt his sword about him, leapt on his steed without so much as touching stirrup, and rode up to the Soudan's pavilion. He well knew it from the rest, since on the top thereof flashed a great carbuncle stone.

There were feasting the Soudan, ten kings, and many barons, when Sir Guy walked into the pavilion and delivered his message with great roughness of speech. 'Seize him and slay him!' cried the Soudan. But Sir Guy cut his way through his assailants and rushing on the Soudan cut off his head; and while he stooped to pick up the trophy with his left hand, with his right he slew six Saracens, then fought his passage past them all to the tent door, and leapt upon his horse. But the whole Saracen host being roused he never would have got back for all his bravery, but that Heraud within the city saw in a dream the danger he was in, and assembling the Greek army and Sir Guy's knights, came to his rescue and put the Saracens to flight. Then after the battle Sir Guy came in triumph to Constantinople and laid the Soudan's head at the feet of the Emperor Ernis.

Ernis, now being at peace from his enemies, would take Sir Guy through his realms. On their way they saw a dragon fighting with a lion, and the lion having much the worst of the combat, Sir Guy must needs go and fight the dragon. After a hard battle he laid the monster dead at his feet, and the lion came and licked the hands of his deliverer, and would in no wise depart from his side.

Soon afterwards the Emperor Ernis gathered a great company of princes, dukes, earls, barons, bishops, abbots, and priors to the wedding feast, and in presence of them all he gave Sir Guy to be ruler over half the kingdom, and led forth the Princess Loret to be his bride.

But when Sir Guy saw the wedding-ring, his old love came to his mind, and he bethought him of Felice. 'Alas!' he cried, 'Felice the bright and beautiful, my heart misgives me of forgetting thee. None other maid shall ever have my love.' Then he fell into a swoon, and when he came to himself he pleaded

sudden sickness. So the marriage was put off, to the great distress of Ernis and his daughter Loret, and Sir Guy gat him to an inn. Heraud tended him there, and learned how it was for the sake of Felice that Guy renounced so fair a bride, dowered with so rich a kingdom. But after a fortnight, when he could no longer feign illness because of the watchfulness of the emperor and the princess after his health, he was forced to return to court, and delay his marriage from day to day by one excuse and another, until at length fortune delivered him from the strait. The lion which Sir Guy had tamed was used to roam about the palace, and grew so gentle that none feared him and none sought him harm. But Sir Morgadour, being sore vexed to think that all his plans against Sir Guy had failed, determined to wreak his spite upon the lion. He therefore watched until he found the lion asleep within an arbour, and then wounded him to death with his sword. The faithful beast dragged himself so far as Sir Guy's chamber, licked his master's hands, and fell dead at his feet. But a little maid which had espied Sir Morgadour told Sir Guy who had slain his lion. Then Sir Guy went forth in quest of Sir Morgadour, and fought with him and slew him. He had forgiven the wrongs against himself, since he outwitted them; but he was fain to avenge his faithful favourite. Now Sir Morgadour was steward to the German Emperor Regnier. So Sir Guy showed Ernis that if he remained longer at his court, Regnier would surely make war on Greece to avenge his steward's death. Wherefore with this excuse he took his departure and set sail with Heraud in the first ship he could find. They landed in Germany, and visited the Emperor Regnier without telling anything about his steward's death. Then they came to Lorraine.

As Sir Guy took his way alone through a forest, having sent his servants on to prepare a place for him at an inn, he heard the groaning of a man in pain, and turning his horse that way, found a knight sore wounded, and like to die. This knight was named Sir Thierry, and served the Duke of Lorraine. He told how he was riding through the wood with his lady, Osile, when fifteen armed men beset him, and forcibly carried off the lady to take her to Duke Otho of Pavia, his rival. Then said Sir Guy, 'I also have a score to settle with Otho, the felon duke.' Then he took Sir Thierry's arms and armour, and went in pursuit of the ravishers, whom he soon overtook, and having slain every one, he set the lady on his steed and returned to the place where he had left the wounded knight But now Sir Thierry was gone; for four knights of Duke Otho's band had come and carried him off,

So Sir Guy set down the lady, and started to find the four knights. Having fought and vanquished them, he set Sir Thierry on his horse and returned. But now Osile was gone. He searched for many hours to find her, but in vain. So as nightfall drew on he took Sir Thierry to the inn. There by good fortune they found the lady, Sir Guy's servants having met her in the wood and brought her with them to await his coming. A leech soon came and dressed Sir Thierry's wounds, and by the careful tending of Osile and Sir Guy, he got well. Then Sir Guy and Sir Thierry swore brotherhood in arms.

Soon there came a messenger, saying that Duke Otho, hotly wroth at losing the fair Osile, had gone to lay waste the lands of Aubry, Sir Thierry's father; the Duke of Lorraine was likewise helping him. Thereupon Sir Guy equipped five hundred knights and came with Sir Thierry to the city of Gurmoise, where Aubry dwelt. It was a well ramparted city, and after being beaten in two battles with Sir Guy, Duke Otho found, despite the larger numbers of his host, that he could not stand against the courage of the little army and the valour of its leader. Thinking therefore to gain Osile by treachery, he sent an archbishop to Aubry, offering peace, and pledging himself to confirm the marriage of Sir Thierry and Osile, provided only that the lovers would go and kneel in homage to their sovereign Duke of Lorraine. Thereon Sir Thierry and his bride, together with Sir Guy and Sir Heraud, set out unarmed, and after wending a day's journey out of Gurmoise, they met the Duke of Lorraine, who embraced and kissed them in token of peace. But Otho coming forward as if to do the like, made a sign to a band of men whom he had in waiting to seize them. These quickly surrounded Sir Heraud and Sir Thierry and carried them off; but Sir Guy with only his fists slew many of his assailants, and broke away to where a countryman stood with a staff in his hand. Snatching this for a weapon, Sir Guy beat down the quickest of his pursuers, and made his escape. Duke Otho cast Sir Thierry into a deep dungeon in Pavia, and meanwhile gave Osile a respite of forty days wherein to consent to be his bride. But the Duke of Lorraine carried off Sir Heraud.

Weary and hungered, and vexed at the loss of his friends, Sir Guy came to a castle where he sought harbour for the night. Sir Amys of the Mountain, who dwelt there, welcomed him with a good will, and hearing his adventures, offered to raise an army of fifteen hundred men to help him against Duke Otho. But to this Sir Guy said nay, because it would take too long. So, after

a day or two, having hit upon a plan, he disguised himself by staining his face and darkening his hair and beard and eyebrows, and setting out alone, came to Duke Otho with a present of a war-horse of great price, and said, 'You have in your keeping a dastard knight, by name Sir Thierry, who has done me much despite, and I would fain be avenged upon him.' Then Duke Otho, falling into the trap, appointed him jailer to Sir Thierry.

The dungeon wherein Sir Thierry was prisoned was a pit of forty fathoms deep, and very soon Sir Guy spake from the pit's mouth bidding him be of good cheer, for he would certainly deliver him. But a false Lombard overheard these words, and thereby knowing that it was Sir Guy, ran off straightway to tell Duke Otho. Sir Guy followed quickly and sought to bribe the man with money to hold his peace, but without avail, for he would go into the palace where the duke was, and opened his mouth to tell the tale. Then with one blow Sir Guy slew him at Duke Otho's feet. But Otho, very wroth, would have killed Sir Guy then and there, only that he averred that this was a certain traitor whom he found carrying food to the prisoner. Thus having appeased the duke's anger, he gat away secretly to Osile, and bade her change her manner to Duke Otho, and make as though she were willing to have his love. The night before the day fixed for the wedding, Sir Guy let down a rope to Thierry in his pit, and having drawn him up, the two made all speed to the castle of Sir Amys. There, getting equipped with arms and armour, they leaped to horse on the morrow, and riding back to Pavia, met the wedding procession. Rushing into the midst Sir Guy slew Otho and Sir Thierry carried off Osile, whereupon they returned to Sir Amys with light hearts. And when the Duke of Lorraine had tidings of what had befallen Otho he had great fear of Sir Guy, and sent Sir Heraud back with costly gifts to make his peace. So Sir Thierry and Osile were wed, and a sumptuous banquet was held in their honour, with games, and hunting, and hawking, and jousting, and singing of glee-men, more than can be told.

Now as Sir Guy went a-hunting one day, he rode away from his party to pursue a boar of great size. And this boar, being very nimble and fleet of foot, led him a long chase till he came into Flanders. And when he killed the boar he blew upon his horn the prize. Florentine, King of Flanders, hearing it in his palace, said, 'Who is this that slays the tall game on my lands?' And he bade his son go forth and bring him in. The young prince coming with a haughty message to Sir Guy, the knight

struck him with his hunting-horn, meaning no more than chastisement for his discourtesy. But by misadventure the prince fell dead at his feet. Thinking no more of the mishap, and knowing not who it was whom he had slain, Sir Guy rode on to the palace, and was received with good cheer at the king's table. But presently the prince's body being brought in, and Guy owning that he had done this deed, King Florentine took up an axe, and aimed a mighty blow at the slayer of his son. This Sir Guy quickly avoided, and when all arose to seize him, he smote them down on either hand, and fought his way through the hall till he reached his steed, whereon lightly leaping he hasted back to Sir Thierry.

Then after a short while he took leave of Sir Thierry, and came with Sir Heraud to England, to the court of King Athelstan at York. Scarce had he arrived there when tidings came that a great black and winged dragon was ravaging Northumberland, and had destroyed whole troops of men which went against him. Sir Guy at once armed himself in his best proven armour, and rode off in quest of the monster. He battled with the dragon from prime till undern, and on from undern until evensong, but for all the dragon was so strong and his hide so flinty Sir Guy overcame him, and thrust his sword down the dragon's throat, and having cut off his head brought it to King Athelstan. Then while all England rang with this great exploit, he took his journey to Wallingford to see his parents. But they were dead; so after grieving many days for them he gave his inheritance to Sir Heraud, and hasted to Felice at Warwick.

Proudly she welcomed her true knight, and listened to the story of his deeds. Then laughingly Sir Guy asked, should he go another quest before they two were wed?

'Nay, dear one,' said Felice, 'my heart misgives me I was wrong to peril your life so long for fame's sake and my pride in you. A great love-longing I have borne to have you home beside me. But now you shall go no more forth. My pride it was that made me wish you great and famous, and for that I bade you go; but now, beside your greatness and your fame, I am become so little and so unworthy that I grow jealous lest you seek a worthier mate. We will not part again, dear lord Sir Guy.' Then he kissed her tenderly and said, 'Felice, whatever of fame and renown I may have gained, I owe it all to you. It was won for you, and but for you it had not been—and so I lay it at your feet in loving homage, owning that I hold it all of you.'

So they were wed amid the joy of all the town of Warwick;

for the spousings were of right royal sort, and Earl Rohand held a great tournament, and kept open court to all Warwick, Rockingham, and Oxford for fourteen days.

Forty days they had been wed, when it happened that as Sir Guy lay by a window of his tower, looking out upon the landscape, he fell to musing on his life. He thought, 'How many men I have slain, how many battles I have fought, how many lands I have taken and destroyed! All for a woman's love; and not one single deed done for my God!' Then he thought, 'I would fain go a pilgrimage for the sake of Holy Cross.' And when Felice knew what he meditated she wept, and with many bitter tears besought him not to leave her. But he sighed and said, 'Not yet one single deed for God above!' and held fast to his intent. So he clad himself in palmer's dress, and having taken a gold ring from his wife's hand and placed it upon his own, he set out without any companion for the Holy Land.

But Felice fell into a great wan-hope at his departure, and grieved continually, neither would be comforted; for she said, 'I have brought this on myself by sending him such perilous journeys heretofore, and now I cannot bear to part from him.' But that she bore his child she would have taken her own life for very trouble of heart: only for that child's sake she was fain to live and nurture it when it should be born.

Now after Sir Guy had made his toilsome pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and shrived him of his life, and done his prayers and penances about the holy places, he took his way to Antioch.

Beside a well he met a certain Earl Jonas, whose fifteen sons were held in prison till he should find a champion to deliver the Saracen Sir Triamour from the hands of a fierce and terrible Ethiopian giant named Amiraunt. So Sir Guy took arms again, and rode into the lists, and fought with Amiraunt and slew him; thus both Sir Triamour was delivered from his enemy, and the sons of Earl Jonas were restored to him. After this, Sir Guy travelled many years as a pilgrim of the Cross, till in his wanderings, chancing to come into Almayne, he there fell in with Sir Thierry, who, dressed in palmer's weeds, made sorry complaint. Sir Thierry told how a knight named Barnard inherited Pavia in the room of his cousin Duke Otho; and how Barnard, being at enmity with him because of the slaying of Duke Otho, had never rested from doing him mischief with his sovereign, until the Duke of Lorraine dispossessed him from his lands and brought him into poverty. Howbeit Sir Guy would not reveal himself, and Sir Thierry being faint and weary, laid his head upon Sir Guy's

knees, and so great a heaviness came over him that he fell asleep. As he slept, Sir Guy, watching him, saw a small white weasel creep out from the mouth of the sleeping man, and run to a little rivulet that was hard by, going to and fro beside the bank, not seeming wistful how to get across. Then Sir Guy rose gently and laid his sword athwart the stream from bank to bank; so the weasel passed over the sword, as it had been a bridge, and having made his way to a hole at the foot of the hill on the other side, went in thereat. But presently the weasel came out, and crossing the stream in the same manner as before jumped into the sleeper's mouth again. Then Sir Thierry woke and told his dream. 'I dreamed,' said he, 'that I came beside a mighty torrent which I knew not how to pass, until I found a bridge of shining steel, over which I went, and came into a cavern underground, and therein I found a palace full of gold and jewels. I pray thee, brother palmer, read to me this dream.'

Then Sir Guy said that without doubt it betokened a fair treasure hid by a waterside, and with that showed him the hole under the hill whereat he had seen the weasel go in. There they digged and found the treasure, which was very great; yet Sir Guy would have no share therein, but took leave of Sir Thierry without ever making himself known, and came to Lorraine to the duke that was Sir Thierry's sovereign.

Seeing a palmer, the Duke of Lorraine asked tidings of his travels. 'Sir,' said the palmer, 'men in all lands speak of Sir Thierry, and much do blame you for taking away his heritage at the bidding of so false a knight as Sir Barnard. And palmer though I be, I yet will prove Sir Barnard recreant and traitor upon his body, and thereto I cast down my glove.' Then Sir Barnard took up the glove, and Sir Guy being furnished with armour and a sword and shield and spear, they did battle together. And in the end Sir Guy overcame and slew Sir Barnard, and demanded of the duke to restore Sir Thierry to his possessions, which being granted, he went in search of the banished man, and having found him in a church making his prayer, brought him straightway to the duke, and thus they were made friends. And when Sir Thierry found who his deliverer was he was exceeding glad and would willingly have divided all his inheritance with him. But Sir Guy would receive neither fee nor reward, and after he had abode some time with him at the court, he took his way to England.

Now Athelstan was besieged in Winchester by Anlaf King of Denmark, and could not come out of the city for the great host

that was arrayed against him, whilst all the folk within the city walls were famishing for want of food and thought of nothing but surrender. Moreover King Anlaf had proclaimed a challenge, giving them seven days' grace wherein either to deliver up the city keys, or to find a champion who should fight against the great and terrible Danish giant Colbrand; and every day for seven days the giant came before the walls and cried for a man to fight with him. But there was found no man so hardy as to do battle with Colbrand. Then King Athelstan, as he walked to and fro in his city and saw the distress of his people, was suddenly aware of a light that shone about him very brightly, and he heard a voice which charged him to intrust his cause to the first poor palmer he should meet. Soon after he met a palmer in the city, and weening not that it was Sir Guy, kneeled humbly to him, in sure faith in the heavenly voice, and asked his help. 'I am an old man,' said the palmer, 'with little strength except what Heaven might give me for a people's need beset by enemies. But yet for England's sake and with Heaven's help I will undertake this battle.'

They then clothed him in the richest armour that the city could furnish, with a good hauberk of steel, and a helmet whose gold circle sparkled with precious stones, and on the top whereof stood a flower wrought of divers colours in rare gems. Gloves of mail he wore, and greaves upon his legs, and a shirt of ring-mail upon his body, with a quilted gambeson beneath: sharp was the sword, and richly carved the heavy spear he bare; his threefold shield was overlaid with gold. They led forth to him a swift steed; but before he mounted he went down upon his knees and meekly told his beads, praying God to succour him that day. And the two kings held a parley for an hour, Anlaf promising on his part that if his champion fell he would go back with all his host to Denmark and nevermore make war on Britain, whilst Athelstan agreed, if his knight were vanquished, to make Anlaf King of England, and henceforth to be his vassal and pay tribute both of gold and silver money.

Then Colbrand strode forth to the battle. So great was he of stature that no horse could bear him, nor indeed could any man make a cart wherein to carry him. He was armed with black armour of so great weight that a score of men could scarce bear up his hauberk only, and it took three to carry his helm. He bare a great dart within his hand, and slung around his body were swords and battle-axes more than two hundred in number.

Sir Guy rode boldly at him, but his spear shivered into pieces

against the giant's armour. Then Colbrand threw three darts. The first two passed wide, but the third crashed through Sir Guy's shield, and glided betwixt his arm and side, nor fell to the ground till it had sped over a good acre of the field. Then a blow from the giant's sword just missed the knight, but lighting on his saddle at the back of him hewed horse and saddle clean in two; so Sir Guy was brought to ground. Yet lightly sprang he to his feet, and though seemingly but a child beside the monster man, he laid on hotly with his sword upon the giant's armour, until the sword brake in his hands. Then Colbrand called on him to yield, since he had no longer a weapon wherewith to fight. 'Nay,' answered Sir Guy, 'but I will have one of thine,' and with that ran deftly to the giant's side and wrenched away a battle-axe wherewith he maintained the combat. Right well Sir Guy endured while Colbrand's mighty strokes shattered his armour all about him, until his shield being broke in pieces it seemed he could no longer make defence, and the Danes raised a great shout at their champion's triumph. Then Colbrand aimed a last stroke at the knight to lay him low, but Sir Guy lightly avoiding it, the giant's sword smote into the earth a foot and more and before he could withdraw it or free his hand, Sir Guy hewed off the arm with his battle-axe; and since Colbrand's weight leaned on that arm, he fell to ground. So Sir Guy cut off his head, and triumphed over the giant Colbrand, and the Danes withdrew to their own country.

Then without so much as telling who he was, Sir Guy doffed his armour and put on his palmer's weeds again, and secretly withdrawing himself from all the feasts and games they held in honour of him in the city of Winchester, passed out alone and took his journey toward Warwick on foot.

Many a year had gone since he had left his wife and home. The boy whom Felice had borne him, named Raynburn, he had never seen; nor, as it befel, did he ever see his son. For Raynburn in his childhood had been stolen away by Saracens and carried to a far heathen country, where King Aragus brought him up and made him first his page, then chamberlain, and as he grew to manhood, knighted him. And now he fought the battles of King Aragus with a strong arm like his father Guy's, neither could any endure against his spear. But all these years Felice had passed in prayer and charity, entertaining pilgrims and tired wayfarers, and comforting the sick and the distressed. And it was so that Sir Guy, all travel-worn and with his pilgrim's staff in hand, came to her house and craved an alms. She took him

in and washed his feet and ministered to him, asking oftentimes if in his travels he had seen her lord Sir Guy. But when he watched her gentleness to the poor and to the children at her gate, he feared to break in upon her holy life, and so refrained himself before her and would not reveal himself, but with a heavy heart came out from the lady's door and gat him to a hermit's cell. There he abode in fasting and in penitence many weeks, till feeling his end draw near, he took the ring from his finger and sent it by a herdsman to Felice. 'Where got you this token?' cried Felice, all trembling with her wonderment and fear. 'From a poor beggar-man that lives in yonder cell,' the herdsman answered. 'From a beggar? Nay, but from a kingly man,' said Felice, 'for he is my husband, Guy of Warwick!' and gave the herdsman a hundred marks. Then she hasted and came to Sir Guy in his hermit's cell, and for a long space they wept in each other's arms, and neither spake a word.

Weaker and fainter waxed Sir Guy. In a little while he died, and Felice closed his tired eyes sleep-fast. Fifteen weary days she lingered sore in grief, and then God's angel came and gently closed her own.

Havelok.

THERE was once a king of England named Athelwold. Earl, baron, thane, knight, and bondsman, all loved him, for he set on high the wise and the just man, and put down the spoiler and the robber. At that time a man might carry gold about with him, as much as fifty pounds, and not fear loss. Chapmen and merchants bought and sold at their ease without danger of plunder. But it was bad for the evil person and for such as wrought shame, for they had to lurk and hide away from the king's wrath; yet was it unavailing, for he searched out the evil-doer and punished him, wherever he might be. The fatherless and the widow found a sure friend in the king; he turned not away from the complaint of the helpless, but avenged them against the oppressor, were he never so strong. Kind was he to the poor, neither at any time thought he the fine bread upon his own table too good to give to the hungry.

But a death-sickness fell on King Athelwold, and when he knew that his end was near he was greatly troubled, for he had one little daughter of tender age, named Goldborough, and he grieved to leave her.

'O my little daughter, heir to all the land, yet so young thou can'st not walk upon it; so helpless that thou can'st not tell thy wants, and yet had need to give commandment like a queen! For myself I would not care, being old and not afraid to die. But I had hoped to live till thou should'st be of age to wield the kingdom; to see thee ride on horseback through the land, and round about a thousand knights to do thy bidding. Alas, my little child, what will become of thee when I am gone?'

Then King Athelwold summoned his earls and barons, from Roxborough to Dover, to come and take counsel with him as he lay a-dying on his bed at Winchester. And when they all wept sore at seeing the king so near his end, he said, 'Weep not, good friends, for since I am brought to death's door your tears can in nowise deliver me; but rather give me your counsel. My little daughter that after me shall be your queen; tell me in whose

charge I may safely leave both her and England till she be grown of age to rule?'

And with one accord they answered him, 'In the charge of Earl Godrich of Cornwall, for he is a right wise and a just man, and held in fear of all the land. Let him be ruler till our queen be grown.'

Then the king sent for a fair linen cloth, and thereon having laid the mass book and the chalice and the paton, he made Earl Godrich swear upon the holy bread and wine to be a true and faithful guardian of his child, without blame or reproach, tenderly to intreat her, and justly to govern the realm till she should be twenty winters old; then to seek out the best, the bravest, and the strongest man as husband for her and deliver up the kingdom to her hand. And when Earl Godrich had so sworn, the king shrived him clean of all his sins. Then having received his Saviour he folded his hands, saying, '*Domine, in manus tuas;*' and so died.

There was sorrow and mourning among all the people for the death of good King Athelwold. Many the mass that was sung for him and the psalter that was said for his soul's rest. The bells tolled and the priests sang, and the people wept: and they gave him a kingly burial.

Then Earl Godrich began to govern the kingdom; and all the nobles and all the churls, both free and thrall, came and did allegiance to him. He set in all the castles strong knights in whom he could trust, and appointed justices and sheriffs and peace-sergeants in all the shires. So he ruled the country with a firm hand, and not a single wight dare disobey his word, for all England feared him. Thus, as the years went on, the earl waxed wonderly strong and very rich.

Goldborough the king's daughter throve and grew up the fairest woman in all the land; and she was wise in all manner of wisdom that is good and to be desired. But when the time drew on that Earl Godrich should give up the kingdom to her, he began to think within himself—'Shall I, that have ruled so long, give up the kingdom to a girl and let her be queen and lady over me? And to what end? All these strong earls and barons governed by a weaker hand than mine, would throw off the yoke and split up England into little baronies, evermore fighting betwixt themselves for mastery. There would cease to be a kingdom and so there would cease to be a queen. She cannot rule it and she shall not have it. Besides, I have a son. Him will I teach to rule and make him king.'

So the earl let his oath go for nothing, and went to Winchester where the maiden was, and fetched her away and carried her off to Dover to a castle that is by the sea-shore. Therein he shut her up and dressed her in poor clothes, and fed her on scanty fare; neither would he let any of her friends come near her.

Now there was in Denmark a certain king called Birkabeyn, who had three children, two daughters and a son. And Birkabeyn fell sick, and knowing that death had stricken him, he called for Godard, whom he thought his truest friend, and said, 'Godard, here I commend my children to thee. Care for them I pray thee, and bring them up as befits the children of a king. When the boy is grown and can bear a helm upon his head and wield a spear, I charge thee make him King of Denmark. Till then hold my estate and royalty in charge for him.' And Godard swore to guard the children zealously, and to give up the kingdom to the boy. Then Birkabeyn died and was buried. But no sooner was the king laid in his grave than Godard despised his oath; for he took the children, Havelok, and his two little sisters, Swanborough and Helfled, and shut them up in a castle with barely clothes to cover them. And Havelok, the eldest, was scarce three years old.

One day Godard came to see the children and found them all crying for hunger and cold; and he said angrily, 'How now! What is all this crying about?' The boy Havelok answered him, 'We are very hungry, for we get scarce anything to eat. Is there no more corn, that men cannot make bread and give us? We are very hungry.' But his little sisters only sate shivering with the cold, and sobbing, for they were too young to be able to speak. The cruel Godard cared not. He went to where the little girls sate, and drew his knife, and took them up one after another and cut their throats. Havelok, seeing this sorry sight, was terribly afraid, and fell down on his knees begging Godard to spare his life. So earnestly he pleaded that Godard was fain to listen: and listening he looked upon the knife, red with the children's blood; and when he saw the still, dead faces of the little ones he had slain, and looked upon their brother's tearful face praying for life, his cruel courage failed him quite. He laid down the knife. He would that Havelok were dead, but feared to slay him for the silence that would come. So the boy pleaded on: and Godard stared at him as though his wits were gone; then turned upon his heel and came out from the castle. 'Yet,' he thought, 'if I should let him go, one day he may wreak me mis-

cnief and perchance seize the crown. But if he dies my children will be lords of Denmark after me.' Then Godard sent for a fisherman whose name was Grim, and he said, 'Grim, thou wot test well thou art my thrall. Do now my bidding and to-morrow I shall make thee free and give thee gold and land. Take this child with thee to-night when thou goest a-fishing, and at moon rise cast him in the sea, with a good anchor fast about his neck to keep him down. To-day I am thy master and the sin is mine To-morrow thou art free.'

Then Grim took up the child and bound him fast, and having thrust a gag of clouts into his mouth so that he could not speak he put him in a bag and took him on his back and carried him home. When Grim got home his dame took the bag from off his shoulders and cast it down upon the ground within doors; and Grim told her of his errand. Now as it drew to midnight he said, 'Rise up, dame, and blow up the fire to light a candle, and get me my clothes, for I must be stirring.' But when the woman came into the room where Havelok lay she saw a bright light round the boy's head, as it had been a sunbeam, and she called to her husband to come and see. And when he came they both marvelled at the light and what it might mean, for it was very bright and shining. Then they unbound Havelok and took away the gag, and turning down his shirt they found a king-mark fair and plain upon his right shoulder. 'God help us, dame,' said Grim, 'but this is surely the heir of Denmark, son of Birkabeyn our king! Aye, and he shall be king in spite of Godard.' Then Grim fell down at the boy's feet and did him obeisance, and said 'Forgive me, my king, for that I knew thee not. We are thy thralls, and henceforth will feed and clothe thee till thou art grown a man and can bear shield and spear. Then deal thou kindly by me and mine as I shall deal to thee. But fear not Godard. He shall never know, and I shall be a bondsman still for I will never be free till thou, my king, shalt set me free.'

Then was Havelok very glad, and he sat up and begged for bread. And they hasted and fetched bread and cheese and butter and milk; and for very hunger the boy ate up the whole loaf, for he was well-nigh famished. And after he had eaten, Grim made a fair bed and undressed Havelok and laid him down to rest saying, 'Sleep, my son; sleep fast and sound and have no care for nought shall harm thee.'

On the morrow Grim went to Godard and telling him he had drowned the boy, asked for his reward. But Godard bade him go home and remain a thrall, and be thankful that he was not

hanged for so wicked a deed. After a while Grim, beginning to fear that both himself and Havelok might be slain, sold all his goods, his corn, and cattle, and fowls, and made ready his little ship, tarring and pitching it till not a seam nor a crack could be found, and setting a good mast and sail therein. Then with his wife, his three sons, his two daughters, and Havelok, he entered into the ship and sailed away from Denmark; and a strong north wind arose and drove the vessel to England, and carried it up the Humber so far as Lindesay, where it grounded on the sands. Grim got out of the boat with his wife and children and Havelok, and then drew it ashore.

On the shore he built a house of earth and dwelt therein, and from that time the place was called Grimsby, after Grim.

Grim did not want for food, for he was a good fisherman both with net and hook, and he would go out in his boat and catch all manner of fish—sturgeons, turbot, salmon, cod, herrings, mackerel, flounders, plaice, lampreys, and thornback, and he never came home empty-handed. He had four panniers made for himself and his sons, and in these they used to carry the fish to Lincoln, to sell them, coming home laden with meat and meal, and simnel cakes, and hemp and rope to make new nets and lines. Thus they lived for twelve years. But Havelok saw that Grim worked very hard, and being now grown a strong lad, he bethought him 'I eat more than Grim and all his five children together, and yet do nothing to earn the bread. I will no longer be idle, for it is a shame for a man not to work.' So he got Grim to let him have a pannier like the rest, and next day took out a great heaped basket of fish, and sold them well, bringing home silver money for them. After that he never stopped at home idle. But soon there arose a great dearth, and corn grew so dear that they could not take fish enough to buy bread for all. Then Havelok, since he needed so much to eat, determined that he would no longer be a burden to the fisherman. So Grim made him a coat of a piece of an old sail, and Havelok set off to Lincoln barefoot to seek for work.

It so befell that Earl Godrich's cook, Bertram, wanted a scullion, and took Havelok into his service. There was plenty to eat and plenty to do. Havelok drew water and chopped wood, and brought turves to make fires, and carried heavy tubs and dishes, but was always merry and blythe. Little children loved to play with him; and grown knights and nobles would stop to talk and laugh with him, although he wore nothing but rags of old sailcloth which scarcely covered his great limbs, and all mi

how fair and strong a man God had made him. The cook liked Havelok so much that he bought him span-new clothes with shoes and hosen; and when Havelok put them on, no man in the kingdom seemed his peer for strength and beauty. He was the tallest man in Lincoln, and the strongest in England.

Earl Godrich assembled a Parliament in Lincoln, and afterward held games. Strong men and youths came to try for mastery at the game of putting the stone. It was a mighty stone, the weight of an heifer. He was a stalwart man who could lift it to his knee, and few could stir it from the ground. So they strove together, and he who put the stone an inch further than the rest was to be made champion. But Havelok, though he had never seen the like before, took up the heavy stone, and put it full twelve foot beyond the rest, and after that none would contend with him. Now this matter being greatly talked about, it came to the ears of Earl Godrich, who bethought him—'Did not Atholwold bid me marry his daughter to the strongest man alive? In truth I will marry her to this cook's scullion. That will abase her pride; and when she is wedded to a thrall she will be powerless to injure me. That will be better than shutting her up; better than killing her.' So he sent and brought Goldborough to Lincoln, and set the bells a-ringing, and pretended great joy, for he said, 'Goldborough, I am going to spouse thee to the fairest and stalwartest man living.' But Goldborough answered she would never wed with any but a king. 'Aye, aye, my girl; and so thou would'st be queen and lady over me? But thy father made me swear to give thee to the strongest man in England and that is Havelok, the cook's scullion; so lief or loth to-morrow thou shalt wed.' Then the Earl sent for Havelok and said 'Master, wilt wive?' 'Not I,' said Havelok—'for I cannot feed nor clothe a wife. I have neither stick nor stem—no house, no cloth, no victuals. The very clothes I wear do not belong to me but to Bertram the cook, as I do.' 'So much the better,' said the earl, 'but thou shalt either wive with her that I shall bring thee or else hang upon a tree. So choose.' Then Havelok said he would sooner wive. Earl Godrich went back to Goldborough and threatened her with burning on a stake unless she yielded to his bidding. So, thinking it God's will, the maid consented. And on the morrow they were wed by the Archbishop of York, who had come down to the Parliament, and the earl told money out upon the mass-book for her dower.

Now after he was wed, Havelok wist not what to do, for he saw how greatly Earl Godrich hated him. He thought he would

go and see Grim. When he got to Grimsby he found that Grim was dead, but his children welcomed Havelok and begged him bring his wife thither, since they had gold and silver and cattle. And when Goldborough came, they made a feast, sparing neither flesh nor fowl, wine nor ale. And Grim's sons and daughters served Havelok and Goldborough.

Sorrowfully Goldborough lay down at night, for her heart was heavy at thinking she had wedded a thrall. But as she fretted she saw a light, very bright like a blaze of fire, which came out of Havelok's mouth. And she thought 'Of a truth but he must be nobly born.' Then she looked on his shoulder, and saw the king-mark, like a fair cross of red gold, and at the same time she heard an angel say,

'Goldborough, leave sorrowing, for Havelok is a king's son, and shall be King of England and of Denmark, and thou queen.'

Then was Goldborough glad, and kissed Havelok, who, straightway waking, said, 'I have seen a strange dream. I dreamed I was on a high hill whence I could see all Denmark; and I thought as I looked that it was all mine. Then I was taken up and carried over the salt sea to England, and methought I took all the country and shut it within my hand.' And Goldborough said, 'What a good dream is this! Rejoice, for it betokeneth that thou shalt be King of England and of Denmark. Take now my counsel and get Grim's sons to go with thee to Denmark.'

In the morning Havelok went to the church and prayed God speed him in his undertaking. Then he came home and found Grim's three sons just going off a-fishing. Their names were Robert the Red, William Wendut, and Hugh Raven. He told them who he was, how Godard had slain his sisters, and delivered him over to Grim to be drowned, and how Grim had fled with him to England. Then Havelok asked them to go with him to Denmark, promising to make them rich men. To this they gladly agreed, and having got ready their ship and victualled it, they set sail with Havelok and his wife for Denmark. The place of their landing was hard by the castle of a Danish earl named Ubbe, who had been a faithful friend to King Birkabeyn. Havelok went to Earl Ubbe, with a gold ring for a present, asking leave to buy and sell goods from town to town in that part of the country. Ubbe, beholding the tall, broad-shouldered, thick-chested man, so strong and cleanly made, thought him more fit for a knight than for a pedlar. He bade Havelok bring his wife and come and eat with him at his table. So Havelok went to fetch Goldborough, and Robert the Red and William Wendut

led her between them till they came to the castle, where Ubbe, with a great company of knights, welcomed them gladly. Havelok stood a head taller than any of the knights, and when they sat at table Ubbe's wife ate with him, and Goldborough with Ubbe. It was a great feast, and after the feast Ubbe sent Havelok and his friends to Bernard Brown, bidding him take care of them till next day. So Bernard received the guests and gave them a rich supper.

Now in the night there came sixty-one thieves to Bernard's house. Each had a drawn sword and a long knife, and they called to Bernard to undo the door. He started up and armed himself, and told them to go away. But the thieves defied him, and with a great boulder-stone brake down the door. Then Havelok, hearing the din, rose up, and seizing the bar of the door stood on the threshold and threw the door wide open, saying, 'Come in, I am ready for you!' First came three against him with their swords, but Havelok slew these with the door bar at a single blow; the fourth man's crown he brake; he smote the fifth upon the shoulders, the sixth athwart the neck, and the seventh on the breast; so they fell dead. Then the rest drew back and began to fling their swords like darts at Havelok till they had wounded him in twenty places. For all that, in a little while he killed a score of the thieves. Then Hugh Raven waking up called Robert and William Wendut. One seized a staff, each of the others a piece of timber big as his thigh, and Bernard his axe, and all three ran out to help Havelok. So well Havelok and his fellows laid about them, breaking ribs and arms and shanks, and cracking crowns, that not a thief of all the sixty-one was left alive. Next morning when Ubbe rode past and saw the sixty-one dead bodies, and heard what Havelok had done, he sent and brought both him and Goldborough to his own castle, and fetched a leech to tend his wounds, and would not hear of his going away. For, said he, 'This man is better than a thousand knights.'

Now that same night, after he had gone to bed, Ubbe awoke about midnight and saw a great light shining from the chamber where Havelok and Goldborough lay. He went softly to the door and peeped in to see what it meant. They were lying fast asleep and the light was streaming from Havelok's mouth. Ubbe went and called his knights and they also came in and saw this marvel. It was brighter than a hundred burning tapers; bright enough to choose money by. Havelok lay on his left side with his back towards them, uncovered to the waist; and they saw the

king-mark on his right shoulder sparkle like shining gold and carbuncle. Then knew they that it was King Birkabeyn's son, and seeing how like he was to his father, they wept for joy. Thereupon Havelok awoke, and all fell down and did him homage, saying he should be their king. On the morrow Ubbe sent far and wide and gathered together earl and baron, dreng and thane, clerk, knight, and burgess, and told them all the treason of Godard, and how Havelok had been nurtured and brought up by Grim in England. Then he showed them their king, and the people shouted for joy at having so fair and strong a man to rule them. And first Ubbe sware fealty to Havelok, and after him the others both great and small. And the sheriffs and constables and all that held castles in town or burg came out and promised to be faithful to him. Then Ubbe drew his sword and dubbed Havelok a knight, and set a crown upon his head and made him king. And at the crowning they held merry sports—jousting with sharp spears, tilting at the shield, wrestling, and putting the stone. There were harpers and pipers and glee-men with their tabours; and for forty days a feast was held with rich meats in plenty and the wine flowed like water. And first the king made Robert and William Wendut and Hugh Raven all barons, and gave them land and fee. Then when the feast was done, he set out with a thousand knights and five thousand sergeants to seek for Godard. Godard was a-hunting with a great company of men, and Robert riding on a good steed found him and bade him come to the king. Godard smote him and set on his knights to fight with Robert and the king's men. They fought till ten of Godard's men were slain; the rest began to flee. 'Turn again, O knights!' cried Godard, 'I have fed you and shall feed you yet. Forsake me not in such a plight.' So they turned about and fought again. But the king's men slew every one of them and took Godard and bound him and brought him to Havelok. Then King Havelok summoned all his nobles to sit in judgment and say what should be done to such a traitor. And they said, 'Let him be dragged to the gallows at the mare's tail, and hanged by the heels in fetters, with this writing over him, "This is he that reft the king out from the land, and the life from the king's sisters."' So Godard suffered his doom and none pitied him.

Then Havelok gave his sceptre into Earl Ubbe's hand to rule Denmark on his behalf and after that took ship and came to Grimsby, where he built a priory for black monks to pray evermore for the peace of Grim's soul. But when Earl Godrich

understood that Havelok and his wife were come to England, he gathered together a great army to Lincoln on the 17th of March, and came to Grimsby to do battle with Havelok and his knights. It was a great battle, wherein more than a thousand knights were slain. The field was covered with pools of blood. Hugh Raven and his brothers, Robert and William, did valiantly and slew many earls; but terrible was Earl Godrich to the Danes, for his sword was swift and deadly as the levin fork. Havelok came to him and minding him of the oath he sware to Athelwold that Goldborough should be queen, bade him yield the land. But Godrich defied him, and running forward with his heavy sword cut Havelok's shield in two. Then Havelok smote him to the earth with a blow upon the helm; but Godrich arose and wounded him upon the shoulder, and Havelok, smarting with the cut, ran upon his enemy and hewed off his right hand. Then he took Earl Godrich and bound him and sent him to the queen. And when the English knew that Goldborough was the heir of Athelwold they laid by their swords and came and asked pardon of the queen. And with one accord they took Earl Godrich and bound him to a stake and burned him to ashes for the great outrage he had done.

Then all the English nobles came and sware fealty to Havelok, and crowned him king in London. Of Grim's two daughters Havelok wedded Gunild the elder to Earl Reyner of Chester; and Levive the younger, fair as a new rose blossom opening to the sun, he married to Bertram, the cook, whom he made Earl of Cornwall in the room of Godrich.

Sixty years reigned Havelok and Goldborough in England, and they had fifteen children, who all became kings and queens. All the world spake of the great love that was betwixt them twain. Apart, neither knew joy or happiness. They grew never weary one of the other, for their love was ever new; and not a word of anger passed between them all their lives.

Beowulf.

Scef and Scyld and Beówulf—these were the god-like kings of the Gar-Danes in days of yore.

Upon the sea and alone came Scéf to the land of Scâni. He came in fashion as a babe, floating in an ark upon the waters, and at his head a sheaf of corn. God sent him for the comfort of the people because they had no king. He tore down the foemen's thrones, and gave the people peace and passed away.

From him proceeded Scyld the Scefling, the strong war prince, wise in counsel, generous ring-giver. When Scyld grew old and decrepit, and the time drew near that he should go away into the peace of the Lord, he would be carried to the sea-shore. Thither with sad hearts his people bare him, and laid him in the bosom of a war-ship heaped with treasure of gold and costly ornaments, with battle-weapons, bills and spears and axes, and linked war-mail. Rich sea-offerings of jewels and precious things they laid upon his breast. High over head they set up a golden ensign; then unfurled the sail to the wind, and mournfully gave their king and all his treasures to the deep and solemn sea; to journey none knew whither. Upon the sea, and alone, went Scyld from the land of the Scâni. He went in fashion as a king, floating away in his good ship along the track of the swans, his war-weeds and his battle-spoils beside him. He gave the people peace, and passed away.

From him came Beówulf the Scylding, glorious and majestic, strong of hand, the beloved chieftain. He gave the people peace, and passed away.

After the days of the god-like kings, the Danes chose Healfdene for their leader. He ruled long and well, and died in a good old age, and Hrothgár his son reigned in his stead. To Hrothgár good fortune and success in war were given, so that he overcame his enemies, and made the Gar-Danes a powerful and wealthy people.

Now, in his prosperity, it came into Hrothgár's mind to build a great mead-hall in his chief city; a lordly palace wherein his warriors and counsellors might feast, they and their children for

ever, and be glad because of the riches which God had given them. Biggest of all palaces was the mead-hall of Hrothgár; high-arched and fair with pinnacles. He named it Heorot, that men might think of it as the heart and centre of the realm; that, banded together in friendship at one common banquet table, they might talk of measures for the common good. With a great feast he opened Heorot the palace, with sound of harp and song of Skald, giving gifts of rings and treasure; so that all the people rejoiced and became of one mind, and sware fealty to him. Then Hrothgár's heart was lifted up because of Heorot which he had builded.

But far away in the darkness where dwell the Jötuns and Orks and giants which war against God, there abode a mighty evil spirit, a Jötun, both terrible and grim, called Grendel, a haunter of the marshes, whose fastnesses were dank and fenny places. Grendel saw the lofty palace reared, and was filled with jealous anger because the people were as one, and because there was no longer any discord among them. At night he came to the mead-hall, where slept the nobles and thanes after the feast, forgetful of sorrow and unmindful of harm; he seized upon thirty men and carried them away to his dwelling-place, there to prey upon their carcases. Bitterly mourned the Gar-Danes for their brothers when awaking in the morning twilight they saw the track of the accursed spirit, and knew that mortal strength availed for nought against their enemy. Next night Grendel came and did the like, and so for twelve years thereafter came he oftentimes and snatched the Danes while they slumbered, and carried them away to slay and tear them, neither for any ransom would he be prevailed upon to make peace. The houses in the land became empty, because of the counsellors and warriors that were swept away to the death-shade of the Ogre of the misty marshes. But like a shepherd for his flock grieved Hrothgár for the desolation of his people. Broken in spirit he sat in the many-coloured mead-hall, watching among his vassals through the night; but Grendel touched him not. To right and left of him the monster seized strong-hearted men, a helpless prey, but passed Hrothgár by. God set his finger on the king that the Jötun should not harm him. Hrothgár grew wearied that he was spared while his dear friends were taken; and when men came to him for counsel, he, the wise counsellor, had none to give, but sat in silence, his head bowed in sorrow on his hands. Vainly the people prayed in the tabernacles to their idols that they would send a spirit-slayer down to save them.

Away to the westward among the people of the Geáts lived a man, strongest of his race, tall, mighty-handed, and clean made. He was a thane, kinsman to Hygelác the Geátish chief, and nobly born, being son of Ecgtheow the Wægmunding, a war-prince who wedded with the daughter of Hrethel the Geát. This man heard of Grendel's deeds, of Hrothgár's sorrow, and the sore distress of the Danes, and having sought out fifteen warriors, he entered into a new-pitched ship to seek the war-king across the sea. Bird-like the vessel's swan-necked prow breasted the white sea-foam till the warriors reached the windy walls of cliff and the steep mountains of the Danish shores. They thanked God because the wave-ways had been easy to them; then, sea-wearied, lashed their wide-bosomed ship to an anchorage, donned their war-weeds, and came to Heorot, the gold and jewelled house. Brightly gleamed their armour and merrily sang the ring-iron of their trappings as they marched into the palace; and having leaned their ample shields against the wall, and piled their ashen javelins, steel-headed, in a heap, they came to where sat Hrothgár, old and bald, among his earls. Hrothgár looked upon the Geátish warriors, chief of whom Hygelác's servant, the mighty son of Ecgtheow, towered tall above the rest, god-like in his shining armour and the dazzling war-net of mail woven by the armourer. Seeing him, Hrothgár was ware that the son of Ecgtheow was Beowulf, raised up of God to be a champion against Grendel the evil spirit,—Beowulf the mighty-handed one, in the gripe of whose fingers was the strength of thirty men. And while wonderingly he gave him welcome, Beowulf spake, 'Hail, O King Hrothgár! Alone and at night I have fought with evil-beings, both Jötuns and Nicors, and have overcome; and now, to deliver the bright Danes from their peril, have I sailed across the sea to undertake battle with Grendel the Ogre. And since no weapon may avail to wound the flinty-hided fiend, I will lay by my sword and shield, and empty-handed go to meet him. I will grapple with him, strength against strength, till God shall doom whether of us two Death taketh. If I be bereft of life, send back to Hygelác the war-shroud which Wayland forged to guard my breast, but make no corpse-feast for me: bury my body, and mark its resting-place, but let the passer-by eat without mourning; fate goeth ever as it must.'

Hrothgár answered, 'Well know I, O my friend Beówulf, of your bravery and the might that dwelleth in your fingers! But very terrible is Grendel. Full oft my hardy warriors, fierce over the ale-cup at night, have promised to await the Ogre with the

terror of their swords and dare his wrath; but as oft at morning tide the benched floor of the palace has reeked with their blood. But since your mind is valiant, sit down with us to our evening feast, where by old custom we incite each other to a brave and careless mind before night set in, and Grendel come to choose his prey.'

Then were the benches cleared, and Beówulf and the Geáts sate in the mead-hall at the banquet with the Danes. Freely flowed the bright sweet liquor from the twisted ale-cup borne by the cup-bearer in his office, whilst the Skald sang of old deeds of valour.

Then said Beówulf, 'Full many a man of you hath Grendel made to sleep the sleep of the sword, and now he looketh for no battle from your hands. But I, a Geát, who in the old time have slain strange shapes of horror in the air or deep down underneath the waves, will encounter him, and alone; unarmed, I will guard this mead-hall through the night. Alone with the fiend will I await the shining of the morrow's sun on victory, or else sink down into death's darkness fast in the Ogre's grasp.' Hrothgár, the old-haired king, took comfort at his steadfast intent, and Wealtheow the Queen, so fair and royally hung with gold, herself bear forth the mead-cup to Beówulf, and greeted him with winsome words as champion of her people. Beówulf took the cup from Wealtheow's hands saying, 'No more shall Grendel prey upon the javelin-bearing Danes till he has felt the might of my fingers.' Happy were the people at his boldness, and blithe their joy over the well-served hall-cup.

Then King Hrothgár would seek his evening rest, for the wan shadows of night were already darkening the welkin. The company arose and greeted man to man, and Hrothgár greeted Beówulf and said, 'O friend, never before did I commit this hall to any man's keeping since I might lift a spear. Have now and hold this best of palaces. Be wakeful and be valorous, and nothing that thou mayest ask shall be too great a prize for victory.' So the king departed with his troop of heroes from the mead-hall.

Beówulf took off his coat of iron mail, loosed the helmet from his head, and from his thigh the well-chased sword; and having put aside his war-gear wholly, stepped upon his bed and laid him down. Around him in the dusk lay many well-armed Danes slumbering from weariness. The darkness fell, and all the keepers of the palace slept save one. Beówulf in a restless mood, naked and weaponless, waited for the foe.

Then in the pale night Grendel the shadow-walker rose up with

the mists from the marshes and came to Heorot, the pinnacled palace. He tore away the iron bands, fire-hardened, wherewith the doors were fastened, and trod the many-coloured floor of the sounding hall. Like fire the anger flashed from his eyes, lightening the darkness with a hideous light. Terribly he laughed as he gloated on the sleeping Danes and saw the abundant feast of human flesh spread out around him.

Beówulf, the strong Waegmunding, held his breath to watch the method of the Ogre's onset. Nor did the fiend delay, for quickly seizing a sleeping warrior he bit him in the throat, drank the blood from his veins, and tare his limbs and ate the dead man's feet and hands. Then coming nearer, Grendel laid his hands upon the watchful champion. Suddenly Beówulf raised himself upon his elbow and clutched the Ogre fast; against the shoulder he fastened on the grim Jötun with his hands; and held him. Never before had Grendel met the gripe of hands so strong. He bent himself with all his might against Beówulf and dragged him from his bed, and toward the door; but Beówulf's fingers never slackened from their hold: he drew the Ogre back. Together they struggled upon the hall pavement till the palace rocked and thundered with their battle. Great wonder was it that the palace fell not, but it was made fast with well-forged iron bands within and without; yet many a mead-bench overlaid with twisted gold was torn from its place in the furious strife, and the ale spilled on the floor. But Grendel found the clutch of his enemy too strong; he could not loose it with all his wrestlings; and he knew that he must seek to flee away and hide himself in his marsh dwellings. But Beówulf griped him tight; and when the fiend would drag him down the hall he put forth all his strength into his clenched hands. Suddenly the Ogre's shoulder rift from neck to waist. The sinews burst asunder, the joints gave way, and Beówulf tare the shoulder and the shoulder-blade from out his body. So Grendel escaped from Beówulf's grasp and in his mortal sickness fled to the fens. There Death clutched him and he died.

Then in the morning many warriors gathered to the mead-hall; and Beówulf brought his trophy, Grendel's hand and arm and shoulder, and hung it high in the palace that all might see. So hard were the fingers and the stiff nails of the war-hand that no well-proven steel would touch them. Hrothgár thanked God and Beówulf for this deliverance, and having made the broken palace strong again with iron bonds and hung it round about with tapestry, he held therein a costly feast of rejoicing with his war

riors and kinsmen, whereat many a mead-cup was outpoured. To Beówulf he gave rich gifts: a golden ensign and a helm, a breastplate and a sword, each wrought with twisted work of gold, together with eight horses whose housings shone with precious stones. And when the lay of the glee-man was sung and the wine flowed, and the jocund noise from the mead-benches rose loud, Queen Wealtheow went forth under her golden crown and bear the royal cup to Beówulf to drink. A ring she gave him of rare workmanship all aglow with carven gems, likewise sumptuous dresses, rich with broidered gold and needlework of divers colours. 'Be happy and fortunate, my lord Beówulf!' she said. 'Enjoy these well-earned gifts, dear warrior, for thou hast cleansed the mead-hall of the realm, and for thy prowess fame shall gather to thee, wide as the in-rolling sea that comes from all the corners of the world to circle round our windy walls.'

Then Wealtheow and her lord King Hrothgár departed to take their evening rest, and Beówulf went to a house appointed for him. But the warriors bared the benches, spread out their beds and bolsters, set their hard-rimmed shields at their heads, and lay down to sleep in the mead-hall. In their ringed mail-shirts they laid them down, ready for war, as was their custom in house and field; ready, if need should befall their lord. Good was the people. So darkness fell in the hall and the Hring-Danes slept, nor wot they that any were fated to die. But at midnight Grendel's mother arose from her dwelling in the cold streams, from her home in the terrible waters, and fiercely grieving for her son's death came and walked the beautiful pavement of Heorot. Greedy of revenge she clutched a noble, very dear to Hrothgár, and tare him in his sleep. Then while the Danes, waking in tumult, were yet smitten with the terror of her presence, she seized from its hanging-place the well-known arm and shoulder of her son, and passed out quickly with the prize. A great cry rose in the mead-hall. Beówulf and King Hrothgár heard it, and came hastily to Heorot.

When King Hrothgár knew what had been done, he said, 'O Beówulf, my friend; still sorrow for my people bindeth me. Æschere, my councillor and war companion, hath been foully torn to death, nor can we tell whose shall be the next blood with which this new wolf-hearted fiend shall glut herself. Scarce a mile hence is her dwelling-place, a stagnant lake within a darksome grove of hoary-rinded trees whose snaky roots twine all about the margin, shadowing it. A foul black water, whereon fire dwelle that night, a loathely lake wide-shunned of man and

beast. The hunted stag, driven thither, will rather part from life upon the brink than plunge therein. Darest thou seek this place, to battle with the monster and deliver us?'

The son of Ecgtheów the Waegmunding answered, 'Yea, I dare. For to avenge a friend is better than to mourn for him. Neither can a man hasten nor delay his death-hour. Fate waiteth for us all; and he that goeth forth to wreak justice need not trouble about his end, neither about what shall be in the days when he no longer lives.'

Then King Hrothgár gave thanks to the mighty God, and caused a steed with curled hair to be bitted and led forth for Beówulf. With a troop of shield-bearers he accompanied the hero along the narrow path across steep stone-cliffs over-hung with mountain trees, till they came to the joyless wood and the drear water where Grendel's mother dwelt. Snakes and strange sea-dragons basked upon the turbid pool, and Nicors lay upon the promontories. Beówulf blew upon his horn a terrible war-dirge, and they sank and hid themselves. Then in his war-mail shirt, which knew well how to guard his body from the clutch of battle, his white helmet, mail-hooded, on his head, and in his hand his hilted knife Hrunting, of trusty steel blood-hardened, Beówulf plunged into the slimy lake and the sea-wave closed above him. Long he swam downward into the dark abyss before he found the bottom. There Grendel's mother lay in wait and grappled him in her claws, and bore him to her roofed sea-hall beneath the water, where gleamed a pale fire-light. Then Beówulf saw the mighty sea-woman, and furious, swung his heavy sword and brought it down with a crash upon her head. But the keen steel failed him in his need, for her hard skull turned its biting edge. So angrily flinging from him his twisted blade, and trusting wholly to his mighty hand-grip, he caught the wolf-woman by the shoulders and bent her backwards to the floor. Fiercely she gave back his grappling, and wrestled him till from weariness he rolled and fell; then, drawing her brown-edged knife she sought at one blow to avenge her son. But the hard battle-net upon his breast hindered the entrance of the knife, and God who rules the firmament protected him, so that he gat upon his feet again. Then Beówulf saw hanging in the sea-hall a huge sword made by giants, a weapon fortunate in victory, doughty of edge, which none but he could wield. Hard grasped he the war-bill by the hilt, and whirled it savagely against the sea-woman's ring mail in despair of life. Furious he struck, and the bone-rings of her neck gave way before it; so the blade passed through her doomed body, and, war-wearied, her carcase lay lifeless on the floor.

Long time with patience waited Hrothgár and his counsellors, looking into the dark lake where Beówulf went down. Noon-day came, and seeing the water stained with blood, they deemed their champion was dead, and sorrowfully gat them home.

But beneath the water was a great marvel. Beówulf cut off the sea-woman's head, but so hot and poisonous was her blood that the mighty sword which reeked therewith melted and burned away, all save the hilt. So it wasted like the ice when the sun loosens the frost-chain and unwinds the wave-ropes. Then Beówulf swam upwards with his heavy burden, the sea-woman's head and the sword-hilt, and having reached the shore he saw the lake dry up. By its hair he carried the woman's head, awful and glaring, to the mead-hall, and showed the wondering Danes the golden sword-hilt wrought in fashion as a snake, and marked with Runic characters wherein the history of its forging was set forth. Beówulf said, 'God and my strong hand prospered me and gave me victory. Yea, in my strength I have wrested away the sword wherewith the giants before the Flood defied the Eternal God! I have overcome the enemies of God, who have battled with Him unsubdued for countless years! Wherefore fear not, King Hrothgár, for thou and thine may sleep secure in Heorot which I have cleansed!'

The wise and hoary king, the mingled-haired, gazed long in silence on the sword-hilt, reading of the wondrous smiths that made it after the fall of the devils. Then he spake gently, 'O my friend Beówulf, great is thy glory and uplifted high, and wondrous are the ways of God who through the wisdom of His great mind distributeth so much strength to one man, making him a refuge-city for the peoples. But suffer a kindly word of counsel, dear warrior. When all things are subject to a man, when the world turneth at his will, he forgetteth that the flower of his strength and his glory are but for a little while before he leave these poor days and fade away forgotten and another come in his place. But the great Shepherd of the Heavens liveth on, and raiseth up and putteth down whom He will. Dear friend, beware of pride, which groweth up and anon beguileth the heart so fast to sleep that the warrior remembereth not how Death will overpower him at the last. So gloried I, when with spear and sword having freed the Hring-Danes from all their enemies under heaven, I built this mead-hall in my pride and reckoned not upon an adversary. But God sent Grendel many years to trouble me, till my pride was humbled, and He brought me a deliverer in thee. Wherefore I give Him thanks and pray thee to be like-

minded, to bear thine honours meekly and to choose eternal gains. Go now with gladness to the feast, and to-morrow we will give forth treasure, the dear mead of warriors.'

Great joy was there in many-windowed Heorot, and when Night covered the land with her dusky helmet the warriors laid them down in peace and slept beneath the lofty arches, various with gold: no foe came near the noble dwelling-place; for Heorot was fully purged.

After that, when Beówulf would make ready his vessel to cross the sea again to his kinsman Hygelác, lord of the Geáts, King Hrothgár loaded him with a multitude of gifts of gold and rings and battle-harness, and made a treaty with him that there should be peace for ever betwixt the Gar-Danes and the Geáts, and that the treasures of both peoples should be held in common. So Beówulf and his companions entered their sharp-keeled ship and sailed to their home across the wide sea-plain, the sea-gull's path. Hygelác welcomed him returning spoil-laden from the game of war, and Beówulf shared his treasures with his friends and kinsfolk. Yet was it for a long time a shame and reproach to the Geáts that they held the might and courage of Beówulf in but little esteem, neither made they him a ruler and a chief among them. During many years the son of Ecgtheów grew old in good and quiet deeds; for he, the fierce in war, was gentle of mind, and meekly held the might and strength wherewith he was indued of God. But the Swedes came up to battle against the Geáts, and in his time of need Hygelác went to his treasure-house and brought forth Nagling, the wound-hardened sword, old and grey spotted, of Hrethel, Beówulf's grandfather, and gave it to the strong Waegmunding, and made him captain over seven thousand warriors and gave him a royal seat. So Beówulf went to battle and drave out the enemy. But Hygelác fell in the war tumult. Thereby the broad kingdom came by inheritance into Beówulf's hand; and he was made king and held it fifty years with a strong arm against all foes, ruling wisely as a prudent guardian of his people.

Now, in those days, a terrible flaming dragon began to rule in the dark nights, a fire-drake which long had abode in the cavern of a rocky cliff hard by the sea, along a difficult and stony path unknown to men. All his cavern was full of ancient treasure in rings and vases and golden ornaments, which he had secretly stolen during a space of three hundred years. Folk missed their gold and jewels, but knew not who the robber was, until one night a wayfarer by chance wandered into the cave and saw the

precious hoard and the dragon slumbering by it, and snatched a golden drinking-cup from the glittering heap and fled. Hot burned the dragon's anger when, awaking, he missed the gold drinking-cup, and saw that his secret treasure-hoard was known to men. He rose upon his flaming wings each night and sped to and fro seeking the man who had done him this evil; and where he went he consumed houses and people and scorched the land into a wilderness. The waves of fire reached the palace and destroyed that best of buildings, the fastness of the Geáts, and the people trembled for fear of the terrible flyer of the air. Dark thoughts came into Beówulf's mind, insomuch that he was even angry with the Almighty because of the plague which visited the people, and in his bitterness he spake hard things against the Eternal Lord such as befitted him not. Then he commanded to make a variegated shield of iron, strong and well-tempered, to withstand the fire-breath of the adversary, and having put on his war-mail, he called together his warriors, and said, 'Many a battle, O my comrades, have I dared from my youth up; many a warrior's soul have I loosed from its shattered house of bone with my biting war-bill. Now for the greater glory of my age will I seek this flaming war-fly alone. Be it yours to abide afar off on the hill and watch the combat, but take no part therein. The glory and the treasure and the war are mine alone. Would I might proudly grapple with nothing but my naked hands against this wretch, as of old I did with Grendel! But since the war-fire is so fierce and poisonous, I take my shield and byrnie and my sword. Not a footstep will I flee till Fate make up her reckoning betwixt us.'

Then arose the famous warrior, stoutly trusting in his strength, and came to the hoary stone-cliff whence waves of fire flowed like a rushing mountain torrent. Boldly and with angry words the lord of the Geáts defied the fire-drake to come out and face the thirsty steel of Nagling, his sharp-edged blade.

Quickly the winged worm answered to his challenge. Bending itself together for the contest, and darting furious flames, it closed in battle with the haughty warrior; and they who beheld afar off saw nothing but the fire which wrapped the fighters round. The good shield guarded Beówulf's body less truly than he had hoped from the beams of fire. Nagling, the hard-edged, bit less strongly than the champion, who knew so well to swing the war-bill, had need in his extremity: the keen sword deceived him as a blade of such old goodness ought not to have done. The fierce treasure-keeper, boiling with fury, flooded the plain

in a sea of fire, so that the nobles which watched the combat turned and fled to the wood for safety. All turned and fled save one. Wigláf, son of Weohstán, a dear shield-warrior, only kinsman of Beówulf, saw his lord suffer in the bitter strife, and his heart could no longer refrain. He seized his shield of yellow lindenwood, and his old tried sword. 'Comrades,' he cried, 'forget ye all the gifts of rings and treasure we have received from Beówulf's hands at the daily out-pouring of the mead? Forget ye his past benefits and his present need?' Then he ran through the deadly smoke and the clinging fire to succour his dear lord. The flame burnt up his linden shield, but Wigláf ran boldly underneath the shield of his master and fought at his side. Then Beówulf, jealous for his single fame, though heat-oppressed and wearied, swung his great war-sword and drave it down mightily upon the head of the fire-drake. But Nagling failed him, and brake in sunder with the blow; for Beówulf's hand was too strong and overpowered every swordblade forged by mortal man, neither was it granted to him at any time that the edges of the smith's iron might avail him in war. Wildly he spurned the treacherous sword-hilt from him, and furious rushed upon the fiery worm and clutched it by the neck in the terrible gripe of his naked hands. There upon the plain he throttled it, while the burning life-blood of the fire-drake boiled up from its throat and set his hands aflame. Yet loosened he never his gripe, but held the twining worm till Wigláf carved its body in twain with his sword. Then Beówulf flung the carcase to the earth and the fire ceased.

But the fiery blood was on his hands; and they began to burn and swell; and he felt the poison course through all his veins and boil up in his breast. Then Beówulf knew that he drew nigh the end of this poor life; and whilst Wigláf cooled his wounds with water, he said, 'Fifty years have I shepherded my people, and though so strong no king dared greet me with his warriors, I have only fought to hold my own. Neither have I made war on any man for lust of gain or conquest, nor oppressed the weak, nor sworn unjustly. Wherefore I fear not that the Ruler of men will reproach me with the doings of my life. But now, dear Wigláf, go quickly to the cavern and bring me of the gold and many-coloured gems that I may look thereon before I die; that so, feasting my eyes with the treasure I have purchased for my people, I may more gently yield up my life.'

So Wigláf hastened and came to the fire-drake's treasure-house; and lo! his eyes were dazzled with the glittering gold, the dishes,

cups, and bracelets that were heaped within the cave and lightened it. Then he laded himself with gem-bright treasure, one trinket of each kind, and a lofty golden ensign, the greatest wonder made with hands, and a war-bill jewelled, shod with brass and iron-edged; and came again to his master. Fast ebbed the chieftain's life upon the sward. Senseless he lay, and very near his end. Wigláf cooled his fiery veins with sprinkled water, and the lord of the Geáts opened his eyes and gazed upon the golden cups and variegated gems. He said, 'Now give I thanks to the Lord of All, the King of Glory, for the precious riches which mine eyes behold; nor do I grudge to have spent my life to purchase such a treasure for my people. Bid them not to weep my death, but rather glory in my life. Let them make a funeral fire wherein to give my body to the hot war-waves; and let them build for my memorial a lofty mound to sea-wards on the windy promontory of Hronesnaes, that the sea-sailors as they journey on the deep may see it from afar and say, "That is Beówulf's cairn."'

Then from his neck he lifted his golden chain, and took his helmet and his byrnie and his ring and gave them to Wigláf, saying, 'Dear friend, thou art the last of all our kin, the last of the Waegmundings. Fate hath long swept my sons away to death. I must go and seek them!' So parted his soul from his breast.

Presently came the nobles which before had fled, and found Wigláf washing the body of their prince with water and sorrowfully calling upon him by name. Bitterly spake Wigláf to them. 'Brave warriors! Now that the war is over, have you in truth summoned courage up to come and share the treasure? You, who forsook the treasure-earner in his need; forsook in his extremity the high prince who gave you the very war-trappings wherein you stand? I tell you nay. You shall see the treasure with your eyes and hold it in your hands, but it shall not profit you. The Swedes beyond the sea who came against Hygelác and slew him, the same that Beówulf overcame and drave out, when they learn that our strong warrior has passed into his rest, will come again and snatch the land from your weak holding and carry you away into bondage, and seize the treasure. Let it be his who won it! Safer will he guard it in his sleep than you with feeble war-blades and weak javelins. Let the lord of the Geáts slumber with it in the cairn which we shall build for him; so shall men fear to touch the treasure as they would to snatch a sleeping lion's prey.'

So with one accord they bare the hoary warrior to Hronesnaes,

and from the cavern drew out the twisted gold in countless waggon-loads.

Then for Beówulf did the people of the Geáts prepare a funeral pile, strong, hung round with helmets, with war-boards and bright byrnies; and weeping they laid their lord upon the wood. Eight chosen warriors walked with Wigláf round the pile with torches to kindle the bale-fire. The wood smoke rose aloft, the noise of mourning of a people sorry of mood mingled with the crackling of the blaze, and the wind blew on the war-bier till the flames consumed the bone-house of the mighty-handed chief.

Then the Geáts wrought a great cairn beside the sea. It was high and broad, and easy to behold by the sailors over the waves. Ten days they wrought thereat, and built up the beacor. vast and tall, and laid the ashes of their lord therein. Then they brought the rings and gems and ornaments and put them in the mound. No earl ever wore the twisted gold for a memorial, no maiden was made glad with the golden rings upon her neck, but the treasure sleeps in the earth with him who won it. Twelve nobles rode about the mound calling to mind their king in speech and song; praising his valour; even as it is fit that a man should extol his lord and love him in his soul after his body has become valueless and only his deeds remain.

So mourned the people of the Geáts for their dear lord. And they said of him that he was the mildest and gentlest of all the kings of the world, the most gracious to his people and the most jealous for their glory.

THE NAME 'BEÓWULF.'

CAMBRIDGE, *February* 19, 1877.

The sense of this name has excited speculation. It clearly means a *bee-wolf*; only, what animal is that? I believe Mr Sweet once suggested that it means a bear, because bears are fond of honey. I wish to draw attention to the fact that the Old Dutch *biewolf*, according to Kilian, was a *woodpecker*. I read that the great black woodpecker is common in Norway and Sweden, and that its food consists of the larvae of wasps, *bees*, and other insects. Also, that the green woodpecker, found in most countries of Europe, has been known to take bees from a hive. The question remains, why should the woodpecker be selected as the type of a hero? The answer is simple—viz., because of its indomitable nature; it is a bird that fights to the death. Wilson says of an ivory-billed woodpecker whom he put into a cage, that he did not survive his captivity more than three days, during which he manifested an unconquerable spirit, and refused all sustenance. This bird severely wounded Wilson while he was sketching him, and died with unabated spirit. 'This unconquerable courage most probably gave the head and bill of the bird so much value in the eyes of the Indians' (*English Cycl. Nat. Hist.*, iv. 345).

If the Indians were thus impressed, it is easy to see that our ancestors may have been the same.

WALTER W. SKEAT.

Roland.

CHARLES the great king had tarried with his host seven years in Spain, until he conquered all the land down to the sea, and his banners were riddled through with battle-marks. There remained neither burg nor castle the walls whereof he brake not down, save only Zaragoz, a fortress on a rugged mountain top, so steep and strong that he could not take it. There dwelt the pagan King Marsilius, who feared not God but served Apollyon and Mahound.

King Marsilius caused his throne to be set in his garden beneath an olive tree, and thither he summoned his lords and nobles to council. Twenty thousand of his warriors being gathered about him, he spake to his dukes and counts saying, 'What shall we do? Lo! these seven years the great Charles has been winning all our lands till only Zaragoz remains to us. We are too few to give him battle, and, were it not so, man for man we are no match for his warriors. What shall we do to save our lands?'

Then up and spake Blancandrin, wily counsellor—'It is plain we must be rid of this proud Charles; Spain must be rid of him. And since he is too strong to drive out with the sword, let us try what promises will do. Send an ambassage and say we will give him great treasure in gold and cattle, hawk and hound; say we will be his vassals, do him service at his call; say we will be baptized, forsake our gods and call upon his God: say anything, so long as it will persuade him to rise up with his host and quit our land. Fear nothing, promises cost little; only promise large enough and we shall gain our ends. Wherefore let us choose out messengers to go to Charles and say after this manner: "Marsilius sends greeting to the mighty Charles. Thy servant Marsilius owns thy power, and that it is vain to strive against thee. But he would make a league with thee. Marsilius will renounce his gods, be baptized into Christendom, do thee homage and henceforth be thy vassal. Only make not war upon him, but depart in peace to thine own land and go to Aachen, and there keep the feast of Saint Michael. Thither thy servant Marsilius

will haste to meet thee to perform all his covenant; and with him he will bring tribute, many lions and hounds, seven hundred camels, and a thousand moulted falcons; four hundred harnessed mules, and fifty chariots laden with gold and silver." By my right hand and beard, I swear we shall be rid of him. He will gather his warriors together and go back to his own people. He will want hostages, perchance, for the fulfilment of our covenant. Let him have them. Let him have ten or twenty of our sons; he shall have mine for one. What matters so we save our land? Charles will go back to Aachen and hold the feast, and when the day comes round, will find we have beguiled him. Then he will wax furiously wroth and slay our hostages. What then? Verily, it is better that a score of lads should lose their heads than that we should lose fair Spain. Better a score of us go childless than that all should come to beggary.'

And all the pagans said, 'It is well spoken.'

Now Charles and his host were pitched before Cordova, besieging it. And King Marsilius chose out Blancandrin, and with him nine of the cruellest of his peers who likewise would give their sons to be hostages, to go upon this errand. At the king's command men led forth ten white mules with golden bridles, and saddles trapped about with silver; and he gave olive-branches to the messengers to bear in their hands withal in token of peace and friendship, and sent them on their journey to go and make to Charles all the fair promises which Blancandrin had counselled.

Charles the Emperor held festival before Cordova, and rejoiced, he and his host, because they had taken the city. They had overthrown its walls; they had gotten much booty, both of gold and silver and rich raiment; they had put cables round about its towers and dragged them down. Not a pagan remained in the city; for they were all either slain or turned Christian. The emperor sat among his knights in a green pleasance. Round about him were Roland his nephew, captain of his host, and Oliver, and Duke Sampson; proud Anseis, Geoffrey of Anjou the king's standard-bearer, and fifteen thousand of the noblest born of gentle France. Some lounged upon the white cloth of damask spread upon the grass; wise warriors of sober years sate round the chess-tables, wrapt in the plotting of their game; the younger and more agile tilted on the green. Beneath a pine tree where a rose-briar twined, sat Charles the Great, ruler of France, upon a chair of gold. White and long was his beard; huge of limb and hale of body was the king, and of noble countenance. It needed

not that any man should ask his fellow, saying, 'Which is the king?' for all might plainly know him for the ruler of his people. So when the messengers of King Marsilius came into his presence, they knew him straightway, and lighted quickly down from their mules and came meekly bending at his feet. Then said Blancandrin, 'God save the king, the glorious king whom all men ought to worship. My master King Marsilius sends greeting to the great Charles, whose power no man can withstand, and he prays thee make peace with him. Marsilius offers gifts of bears and lions and leashed hounds, seven hundred camels and a thousand moulted falcons, of gold and silver so much as four hundred mules harnessed to fifty chariots can draw, with all his treasure of jewels. Only make the peace and get thee to Aachen, and my master will meet thee there at the feast of St. Michael; and he will be thy man henceforth in service and worship, and hold Spain of thee; in sooth, all that he hath will he hold of thee; thou shalt be his lord, and thy God shall be his God.'

The emperor bowed his head the while he thought upon the purport of the message; for he never spake a hasty word, and never went back from a word once spoken. Having mused awhile he raised his head and answered, 'The King Marsilius is greatly my enemy. In what manner shall I be assured that he will keep his covenant?' The messengers said, 'Great king, we offer hostages of good faith, the children of our noblest. Take ten or twenty as it seemeth good to thee; but treat them tenderly, for verily at the feast of St. Michael our king will redeem his pledge, and come to Aachen to be baptized and pay his homage and his tribute.'

Then the king commanded a pavilion to be spread wherein to lodge them for the night. And on the morrow, after they had taken their journey home, and the king had heard mass and matins, he called his barons to him. There came Duke Olger and Turpin the Archbishop, Tedbald of Rheims, Gerard and Gerin, Count Roland, and Oliver his companion who was ever at his side, and with them many thousand noble warriors. Ganelon came also, he that wrought the treason and betrayed the Franks. Then the king showed them after what manner the messengers had spoken, and asked their counsel. With one voice the Franks answered, 'Beware of King Marsilius.'

Then spake Roland and said, 'Parley not with him, trust him not. Remember how he took and slew Count Basant and Count Basil, the messengers whom we sent to him aforetime on a peace-

ful errand. Seven years have we been in Spain, and now only Zaragoz holds out against us. Be not slack to finish what has been so long a-doing and is well-nigh done. Gather the host; lay siege to Zaragoz with all thy might, and avenge the blood of Basant and Basil; conquer the last stronghold of the pagans; so win Spain, and end this long and weary war.'

But Ganelon drew near to the king and spake: 'Heed not the counsel of any babbler, unless it be to thine own profit. What has Marsilius promised? Will he not give up his gods, himself, his service and his treasure? Could man ask more? Could we get more by fighting him? How glorious would it be to go to war with a beaten man who offers thee his all! How wise to wage a war to win what one can get without! Roland is wholly puffed up with the pride of fools. He counsels battle for his glory's sake. What careth he how many of us be slain in a causeless fight, if he can win renown? Roland is a brave man; brave enough and strong enough to save his skin, and so is reckless of our lives.'

Then said Duke Naymes (a better vassal never stood before a king), 'Ganelon has spoken well, albeit bitterly. Marsilius is altogether vanquished, and there is no more glory in fighting him. Spurn not him who sues at thy feet for pity. Make peace, and let this long war end.' And all the Franks answered, 'The counsel is good.'

So Charles said, 'Who will go up to Zaragoz to King Marsilius, and bear my glove and staff and make the covenant with him?'

Duke Naymes said straightway, 'I will go;' but the king answered, 'Nay, thou shalt not go. Thou art my right hand in counsel and I cannot spare thee.' Then said Roland, 'Send me.' But Count Oliver, his dear companion, said, 'What! send thee upon a peaceful errand? Hot-blooded as thou art, impatient of all parleying? Nay, good Roland, thou would'st spoil any truce. Let the king send me.'

Charles stroked his long white beard and said, 'Hold your peace, both of you; neither shall go.'

Then arose Archbishop Turpin and said, 'Let me go. I am eager to see this pagan Marsilius and his heathen band. I long to baptize them all, and make their everlasting peace.'

The king answered, 'All in good time, zealous Turpin; but first let them make their peace with me: take thy seat. Noble Franks, choose me a right worthy man to bear my message to Marsilius.'

Roland answered, 'Send Ganelon, my step-father.' And the

Franks said, 'Ganelon is the man, for there is none more cunning of speech than he.'

Now when the coward Ganelon heard these words, he feared greatly, well-knowing the fate of them which had gone aforetime as messengers to Marsilius; and his anger was kindled against Roland insomuch that the fashion of his countenance changed in sight of all. Then he arose from the ground, and throwing the mantle of sable fur from his neck, said fiercely to Roland, 'Men know full well that I am thy step-father, and that there is no love between us; but thou art a fool thus openly to show thy malice. If God but give me to return alive, I will requite thee.'

Roland answered, 'I hear thy words and despise them. These men well know I had no thought of malice. The errand is honourable, and needs a man both skilful and complaisant of speech. Be proud if the king adjudges it to thee.'

Then spake Ganelon, 'I should not go at thy bidding: thou hast never gone or come at mine. Thou art not my son nor am I thy sire. Let Charles command me, I will do his service. But thou shalt repent of this.' Thereat Roland laughed aloud. And Ganelon, when he heard him laugh, turned in a rage and said, 'You shall repent of this!' Then he came bending to King Charles, 'Rightful emperor, I am ready to go up to Zaragoz, albeit no messenger ever returned thence alive. But I pray thee for my boy Baldwin, who is yet young, that thou wilt care for him. Is he not the son of thy sister whom I wedded? Let him have my lands and honours, and train him up among thy knights if I return no more.'

Charles answered, 'Be not so faint-hearted; take the glove and baton, since the Franks have awarded it to thee, and go, do my bidding.' Ganelon said, 'Sire, this is Roland's doing. All my life have I hated him; and I like no better his companion, Oliver. And as for the twelve champion peers of France, who stand by him in all he does, and in whose eyes Roland can do no wrong, I defy them all, here and now.'

Charles smoothed his snowy beard and said, 'Verily Count Ganelon thou hast an ill humour. Wert thou as valiant of fight as thou art of speech, the twelve peers perchance might tremble. But they laugh. Let them. Thy tongue may prove of better service to us upon this mission than their swords.' Then the king drew off the glove from his right hand, and held it forth; but Ganelon, when he went to take it, let it fall upon the ground. Thereat the Franks murmured, and said one to another, 'This is an evil omen, and bodes ill for the message.' But Ganelon

picked it up quickly, saying, 'Fear not: you shall all hear tidings of it.' And Ganelon said to the king, 'Dismiss me, I pray thee.' So the king gave him a letter signed with his hand and seal, and delivered to him the staff, saying, 'Go, in God's name and mine.'

Many of his good vassals would fain have accompanied him upon his journey, but Ganelon answered, 'Nay. 'Tis better one should die than many. Stay here, and if I am slain, like Basil and Basant, be true liegemen to my son Baldwin, and see you get him my lands.' Then Ganelon leapt to horse, and rode on until he overtook the pagan messengers who had halted beneath an olive tree to rest. There Blancandrin talked with Ganelon of the great Charles, and of the countries he had conquered, and of his riches and the splendour of his court. Ganelon also spake bitterly of Roland and his eagerness for war, and how he continually drave the king to battle, and was the fiercest of all the Franks against the pagans. Then after they had rested, they gat to horse again, and Ganelon rode with Blancandrin a little apart from the rest. And Blancandrin said to Ganelon, 'Shall we have peace?' Ganelon said, 'He that sueth for peace often seeketh opportunity for war.' Blancandrin answered, 'He that beareth peace to his master's enemies often desireth to be avenged of his own.' Then each of the two men knew the other to be a rogue; and they made friends, and opened their hearts to each other, and each spake of what was in his mind, and they laid their plans. So it befell that when they came to Zaragoz, Blancandrin took Ganelon by the hand, and led him to King Marsilius, saying, 'O King! who holdest thy power of Mohammed and Apollyon, we have borne thy message to the haughty Charles, but he answered never a word. He only raised his hands on high to his God, and held his peace; but he has sent the noble Count Ganelon, at whose mouth we shall hear whether we may have peace or no.'

Then Ganelon, who had well considered beforehand what he should say, began, 'God save the worthy King Marsilius. Thus saith the mighty Charles through me his messenger: "So thou wilt become a Christian, I will give thee the half of Spain to hold of me in feof, and thou shalt pay me tribute and be my servant. Otherwise I will come suddenly and take the land away by force, and will bring thee to Aachen, to my court, and will there put thee to death."'

When King Marsilius heard this, the colour went from his face, and he snatched a javelin by the shaft, and poised it in his hand. Ganelon watched him, his fingers playing the while with the

sword hilt underneath his mantle, and he said, 'Great king, I have given my message and have freed me of my burden. Let the bearer of such a message die if so it seemeth good to thee. But I dared not leave this land, for all the gold God made, without delivering my master's message. What shall it profit thee to slay the messenger? Will that wipe out the message, or bring a gentler one? Or thinkest thou Charles careth not for his barons? Read now the writing of King Charles the Great.' Therewith he gave into the king's hand a parchment he had made ready in the likeness of his master's writing. And Marsilius brake the seal, and read the letter: 'I, King Charles, remember how thou slewest Basant and his brother Basil; and before I will make the peace, I command thee send hither to me thine uncle, the Caliph, that sitteth next thee on the throne, that I may do with him as I will.' Then the King's son drew his scimitar and ran on Ganelon, saying, 'Give him to me; it is not fit this man should live!' But Ganelon turned, brandished his sword and set his back against a pine-trunk. Then cried Blancandrin, 'Do the Frank no harm; for he has pledged himself to be our spy, and work for our profit.' So Blancandrin went and fetched Ganelon, and led him by the hand and brought him against the king. And the king said, 'Good Sir Ganelon, I was wrong to be angry; but I will make amends. I will give thee five hundred pieces of gold in token of my favour.' Ganelon answered, 'He that taketh not counsel to his own profit is a fool. God forbid I should so ill requite thy bounty as to say thee nay.'

Marsilius said, 'Charles is very old. For years and years he has fought and conquered, and put down kings and taken their lands, and heaped up riches more than can be counted. Is he not yet weary of war, nor tired of conquest, nor satisfied with his riches?' Ganelon answered, 'Charles has long been tired of war; but Roland, his captain, is a covetous man, and greedy of possessions. He and his companion Oliver, and the twelve peers of France, continually do stir up the king to war. These lead the king to do whatsoever it listeth them; but he is become old and feeble, and is aweary of them, and fain would rest. Were these but slain, the world would be at peace. But they have under them full twenty thousand men, the pick of all the host of France, and they are very terrible in war.'

Marsilius spake to him again, saying, 'Tell me; I have four hundred thousand warriors, better men were never seen: would not these suffice to fight with Charles?'

Ganelon answered, 'Nay; what folly is this! Heed wiser

counsel. Send back the hostages to Charles with me. Then will Charles gather his host together, and depart out of Spain, and go to Aachen, there to await the fulfilment of thy covenant. But he will leave his rear-guard of twenty thousand, together with Roland and Oliver and the Twelve, to follow after him. Fall thou on these with all thy warriors; let not one escape. So shall the pride of Charles be broken; for the strength of his army is not in his host, but in these, and in Roland his right arm. Destroy them, and thou mayest choose thy terms of peace, for Charles will fight no more. The rearguard will take their journey by the pass of Siza, along the narrow Valley of Roncesvalles. Wherefore surround the valley with thy host, and lie in wait for them. They will fight hard, but in vain.'

Then Marsilius made him swear upon the book of the law of Mohammed, and upon his sword-handle, that all should happen as he had said. Thus Ganelon did the treason. And Marsilius gave Ganelon rich presents of gold and precious stones, and bracelets of great worth. He gave him also the keys of his city of Zaragoz, that he should rule it after these things were come to pass, and promised him ten mules' burden of fine gold of Arabia. So he sent Ganelon again to Charles, and with him twenty hostages of good faith.

When Ganelon came before Charles, he told him King Marsilius would perform all the oath which he sware, and was even now set out upon his journey to do his fealty, and pay the price of peace, and be baptized. Then Charles lifted up his hands towards Heaven, and thanked God for the prosperous ending of the war in Spain.

Night fell and the king lay down to sleep. And as he slept he dreamed he was in the pass of Siza with no weapon in his hand save an ashen spear; and Count Ganelon came and snatched it from his hand and brake it into splinters. After that he dreamed he was in his royal city, and a viper came and fastened on his hand; and while he tried to shake it off, and could not, a leopard sprang on him and gat him down and would have slain him, but that a faithful hound leaped straightway on the leopard and gripped him by the ear. Then the dog and the leopard fought a terrible combat; but which of the twain overcame the other he could not tell. For the king tossed upon his bed in a sweat with the anguish of his dream; and he awaked and saw the sun shine brightly all about, and knew it was a dream.

But the king arose and gathered to him his host to go away to keep the feast of Saint Michael at Aachen, and to meet Marsilius

there. And Olger the Dane made he captain of the vanguard of his army which should go with him. Then said the king to Ganelon, 'Whom shall I make captain of the rear-guard which I leave behind?' Ganelon answered, 'Roland; for there is none like him in all the host.' Then Roland said to his uncle the king, 'Give me the bow that is in thy hand; I will not let it fall as Ganelon did the glove and staff. Trust me.' So Charles made Roland captain of the rear-guard, and gave the bow into his hand. With Roland there remained behind, Oliver, his dear comrade, and the twelve peers, and Turpin the Archbishop, who for love of Ronald would fain go with him, and twenty thousand proven warriors. Then said the king to his nephew, 'Good Roland, behold, the half of my army have I given thee in charge. See thou keep them safely.' Roland answered, 'Fear nothing. I shall render good account of them.'

So they took leave of one another, and the king and his host marched forward till they reached the borders of Spain. They had to travel along steep and dangerous mountain ways, and down through silent valleys made gloomy with toppling crags. And ever as the king thought upon his nephew whom he left behind, his heart grew heavy with an ill foreboding. So they came into Gascoigny and saw their own lands again. But Charles would not be comforted, for being come into France he would sit with his face wrapped in his mantle, thinking of his dreams; and he often spake to Duke Naymes, saying he feared that Ganelon had wrought some treason.

Now Marsilius had sent in haste to all his emirs and his barons to assemble a mighty army, and in three days he gathered four hundred thousand men to Roncesvalles, and there lay in wait for the rear-guard of King Charles. And a great number of the most valiant pagan kings banded themselves together by a league to assail Roland in a body, and to fight with none other till he was slain.

Now when the rear-guard had toiled up the rocky pass and climbed the mountain-ridge, way-wearied, they looked down on Roncesvalles, whither their journey lay. And behold! all the valley bristled with spears, and the valley-sides were overspread with them, for multitude like blades of grass upon a pasture; and the murmur of the pagan host rose to them on the mountain as the murmur of a sea. Then when they saw that Ganelon had played them false, Oliver spake to Roland, 'What shall we now do because of this treason? For this is a greater multitude of pagans than has ever been gathered together in the world before.

And they will certainly give us battle.' Roland answered, 'God grant it; for sweet it is to do our duty for our king. This will we do: when we have rested we will go forward.' Then said Oliver, 'We are but a handful. These are in number as the sands of the sea. Be wise; take now your horn, good comrade, and sound it; peradventure Charles may hear, and come back with his host to succour us.' But Roland answered, 'The greater the number the more glory. God forbid I should sound my horn and bring Charles back with his barons, and lose my good name, and bring disgrace upon us all. Fear not the numbers of the host; I promise you they shall repent of coming here; they are as good as dead already in my mind.' Three times Oliver urged him to sound his horn, but Roland would not, for he said, 'God and His angels are on our side; through Him we shall do great wonders, and He will not see us put to shame before His enemies.' Yet again Oliver pleaded, for he had mounted up into a pine tree and seen more of the multitude that came against them; far as the eye could see they reached; and he prayed Roland to come and see also. But he would not; 'Time enough,' he said, 'to know their numbers when we come to count the slain. We will make ready for battle.'

Then Archbishop Turpin gathered the band of warriors about him, and said, 'It is a right good thing to die for king and faith; and verily this day we all shall do it. But have no fear of death. For we shall meet to-night in Paradise, and wear the martyr's crown. Kneel now, confess your sins, and pray God's mercy.' Then the Franks kneeled on the ground while the archbishop shrived them clean and blessed them in the name of God. And after that he bade them rise, and, for penance, go scourge the pagans.

Roland ranged his trusty warriors and went to and fro among them riding upon his battle-horse Veillantif; by his side his good sword Durendal. Small need had he to exhort them in extremity; there was not a man but loved him unto death and cheerfully would follow where he led. He looked upon the pagan host, and his countenance waxed fierce and terrible; he looked upon his band, and his face was mild and gentle. He said, 'Good comrades, lords, and barons, let no man grudge his life to-day; but only see he sells it dear. A score of pagans is a poor price for one of us. I have promised to render good account of you. I have no fear. The battle-field will tell, if we cannot. God knows the issue of the fight, but we know that much glory and worship await us upon earth and crowns in Paradise.' Then he gave the word,

, Go forward!' and with his golden spurs pricked Veillantif. So, foremost, he led the rear-guard down the mountain-side, down through the pass of Siza into the Valley of Death called Roncesvalles. Close following came Oliver, Archbishop Turpin, and the valiant Twelve; the guard pressing forward with the shout 'Montjoy!' and bearing the snow-white banner of their king aloft.

Marvellous and fierce was the battle. That was a good spear Roland bare; for it crashed through fifteen pagan bodies, through brass and hide and bone, before the trusty ash brake in his hand, or ever he was fain to draw Durendal from its sheath. The Twelve did wondrously; nay, every man of the twenty thousand fought with lionlike courage; neither counted any man his life dear to him. Archbishop Turpin, resting for a moment to get fresh breath, cried out, 'Thank God to see the rear-guard fight to-day!' then spurred in again among them. Roland saw Oliver still fighting with the truncheon of his spear and said, 'Comrade, draw thy sword,' but he answered, 'Not while a handful of the stump remains. Weapons are precious to-day.'

For hours they fought, and not a Frank gave way. Whereso-ever a man planted his foot, he kept the ground or died. The guard hewed down the pagans by crowds, till the earth was heaped with full two hundred thousand heathen dead. Of those kings which banded together by oath to fight him, Roland gave good account, for he laid them all dead about him in a ring, and Durendal to its hilt reeked blood. But many thousands of the Franks were slain, and of the Twelve there now remained but two.

Marsilius looked upon his shattered host and saw them fall back in panic, for they were dismayed because of the Franks. But Marsilius heard the sound of trumpets from the mountain top and a glad man was he; for twenty strong battalions of Saracens were come to his help, and these poured down the valley-side. Seeing this, the rest of the pagans took heart again, and they all massed about the remnant of the guard, and shut them in on every hand. Nevertheless Roland and his fast lessening band were not dismayed. So marvellously they fought, so many thousand pagans hurled they down, making grim jests the while as though they played at war for sport, that their enemies were in mortal fear and doubted greatly if numbers would suffice to overwhelm these men, for it misgave them whether God's angels were not come down to the battle. But the brave rear-guard dwindled away, and Roland scarce dared turn his eyes to see the

handful that remained. Dead were the Twelve, dead was Duke Samson, dead Engeler of Gascoigny, and proud Duke Anseis, Gerin, and his companion Gerard, Guise, and Berenger, with all the flower of the guard.

Then Roland spake to Oliver, 'Comrade, I will sound my horn, if peradventure Charles may hear and come to us.' But Oliver was angry, and answered, 'It is now too late. Had'st thou but heeded me in time, much weeping might have been spared the women of France, Charles should not have lost his guard, nor France her valiant Roland.' 'Talk not of what might have been,' said Archbishop Turpin, 'but blow thy horn. Charles cannot come in time to save our lives, but he will certainly come and avenge them.'

Then Roland put the horn to his mouth and blew a great blast. Far up the valley went the sound and smote against the mountain tops; these flapped it on from ridge to ridge for thirty leagues. Charles heard it in his hall and said, 'Listen! what is that? Surely our men do fight to-day.' But Ganelon answered the king: 'What folly is this! It is only the sighing of the wind among the trees.'

Weary with battle Roland took the horn again and winded it with all his strength. So long and mighty was the blast, the veins stood out upon his forehead in great cords; he blew on till with the strain his brain-pan brake asunder at the temples. Charles heard it in his palace and cried, 'Hark! I hear Roland's horn. He is in battle or he would not sound it.' Ganelon answered, 'Too proud is he to sound it in battle. My lord the king groweth old and childish in his fears. What if it be Roland's horn? He hunteth perchance in the woods. Forsooth a merry jest it would be for him were the king to make ready for war and gather his thousands, and find Roland at his sport, hunting a little hare!'

The blood ran fast down Roland's face, and in sore pain and heaviness he lifted the horn to his mouth and feebly winded it again. Charles heard it in his palace, and started from his seat; the salt tears gathered in his eyes and dropped upon his snowy beard; and he said, 'O Roland, my brave captain, too long have I delayed! Thou art in evil need. I know it by the wailing of the horn! Quick, now, to arms! Make ready, every man! For straightway we will go and help him.' Then he thrust Ganelon away, and said to his servants, 'Take this man, and bind him fast with chains; keep him in ward till I return in peace and know if he have wrought us treason.' So they bound Ganelon

and flung him into a dungeon; and Charles the Great and his host set out with all speed to come to Roland.

Fierce with the cruel throbbing of his naked brain, and well-nigh blinded with the blood that trickled down his face, Roland fought on, and with his good sword Durendal slew the pagan prince Faldrun and three and twenty redoubtable champions. The little company that was left of the brave rear-guard cut down great masses of the pagans, and reaped among them as the reapers reap at harvest time; but one by one the reapers fell ere yet the harvest could be gathered in. Yet where each Frank lay, beside him there lay for a sheaf his pile of slain, so any man might see how dear he had sold his life. Marganices, the pagan king, espied where Oliver was fighting seven abreast, and spurred his horse and rode and smote him through the back a mortal wound. But Oliver turned and swung his sword Haltclere, and before he could triumph clave him through the helmet to his teeth. Yet even when the pains of death gat hold on Oliver so that his eyes grew dim and he knew no man, he never ceased striking out on every side with his sword and calling 'Montjoy!' Then Roland hasted to his help, and cutting the pagans down for a wide space about, came to his old companion to lift him from his horse. But Oliver struck him a blow that brake the helm to shivers on his throbbing head. Nevertheless Roland for all his pain took him tenderly down and spake with much gentleness, saying, 'Dear comrade, I fear me though art in an evil case.' Oliver said, 'Thy voice is like Roland's voice; but I cannot see thee.' Roland answered, 'It is I, thy comrade.' Then he said, 'Forgive me, that I smote thee. It is so dark I cannot see thy face; give me thy hand; God bless thee, Roland; God bless Charles, and France!' So saying he fell upon his face and died.

A heavy-hearted man was Roland; little recked he for his life since Oliver his good comrade was parted from him. Then he turned and looked for the famous rear-guard of King Charles the Great.

Only two men were left beside himself.

Turpin the Archbishop, Count Gaulter, and Roland set themselves together with the fixed intent to sell their lives as dearly as they might; and when the pagans ran upon them in a multitude with shouts and cries, Roland slew twenty, Count Gaulter six, and Turpin five. Then the pagans drew back and gathered together all the remnant of their army, forty thousand horsemen and a thousand footmen with spears and javelins, and charged upon the three. Count Gaulter fell at the first shock. The

archbishop's horse was killed, and he being brought to earth, lay there a-dying, with four wounds in his forehead, and four in his breast. Yet gat Ronald never a wound in all that fight, albeit the brain was parting asunder in his broken temples, and his pain was very sore.

Then Roland took the horn and sought to wind it yet again. Very feeble was the sound, yet Charles heard it away beyond the mountains, where he marched fast to help his guard. And the king said, 'Good barons, great is Roland's distress; I know it by the sighing of the horn. Spare neither spur nor steed for Roland's sake.' Then he commanded to sound all the clarions long and loud: and the mountains tossed the sound from peak to peak, so that it was plainly heard down in the Valley of Roncesvalles.

The pagans heard the clarions ringing behind the mountains, and they said, 'These are the clarions of Charles the Great. Behold Charles cometh upon us with his host, and we shall have to fight the battle again if we remain. Let us rise up and depart quickly. There is but one man more to slay.' Then four hundred of the bravest rode at Roland; and he, spurring his weary horse against them, strove still to shout 'Montjoy!' but could not, for voice failed him. And when he was come within spear-cast, every pagan flung a spear at him, for they feared to go nigh him, and said, 'There is none born of woman can slay this man.' Stricken with twenty spears, the faithful steed, Veillantif, dropped down dead. Roland fell under him, his armour pierced everywhere with spear-points, yet not so much as a scratch upon his body. Stunned with the fall he lay there in a swoon. The pagans came and looked on him, and gave him up for dead. Then they left him and made all speed to flee before Charles should come. In haste they gat them up the mountain sides and left the gloomy valley piled with dead, and fled away towards Spain.

Roland lifted his eyes and beheld the pagans filing up the mountain passes; and he was left alone among the dead. Then in great pain he drew his limbs from underneath his horse, and gat upon his feet, but scarce could stand for the anguish of his brain beating against his temples. He dragged himself about the valley, and looked upon his dead friends and comrades. Round about each one there lay a full score of pagan corpses, and Ronald said, 'Charles will see that the guard has done its duty.' He came to where Oliver lay, and he lifted the body tenderly in his arms, saying, 'Dear comrade, thou wast ever a good and gentle friend to me; better warrior brake never a spear, nor wielded

sword; wise wert thou of counsel, and I repent me that o
only I hearkened not to thy voice. God rest thy soul!
sweeter friend and truer comrade no man ever had than th
Then Roland heard a feeble voice, and turned and was ware
Archbishop Turpin. Upon the ground he lay a-dying, a pite
sight to see; his face all marred with wounds, his body well-n
hewed in twain, insomuch that his bowels came forth before
eyes: howbeit, he raised his trembling hands and blessed
brave dead about him in the dear name of God. And wh
Turpin beheld Roland, his eyes were satisfied. He said, 'D
Roland, thank God the field is thine and mine. We have fou
a good fight.' Then joined he his hands as though he fain wo
pray, and Roland, seeing the archbishop like to faint for
sharpness of his distress, took and dragged himself to a runn
stream that he espied pass through the valley; and he dipped
water in his horn to bring to him, but could not, for he fell u
the bank and swooned. And when he came to himself, a
crawled to where the archbishop lay, he found him with his ha
still clasped, but having neither thirst nor any pain, for he wa
rest. A lonesome man in the Valley of Death, Roland wept
the last of his friends.

But the brain began to ooze out from his temples, and his p
grew very grievous to be borne. And Roland, when he fo
death coming on him, took his sword Durendal in one hand, a
his horn in the other, and crawled away about a bow-shot t
green hillock whereupon four diverse marble steps were b
beneath the trees. There he lay down in his agony. A cert
Saracen was plundering there among the dead, and watched
Roland ceased to moan in his pain; then, thinking there was
more breath in him, the thief stole softly up, and seeing
glitter of the hilt of Durendal, put forth his hand and drew
from its sheath. Roland lifted his eyes and saw the thief b
over him with the sword in his hand. He seized the horn fr
beside him, and dealt the man a blow upon the crown that br
his skull.

Then he took Durendal into his hands, and prayed that
might not fall into the power of his enemies. He said,
Durendal, how keen of edge, how bright of blade thou a
God sent thee by his angel to King Charles, to be his capta
sword. Charles girt thee at my side. How many count
thou hast conquered for him in my hands! O Durendal, tho
it grieves me sore, I had rather break thee than that pa
hands should wield thee against France.' Then he besou

that God would now eke out his strength to break the sword; and lifting it in his hands he smote mightily upon the topmost marble step. The grey stone chipped and splintered, but the good blade brake not, neither was its edge turned. He smote the second step, which was of sardonyx; the blade bit it, and leaped back, but blunted not, nor brake. The third step was of grey adamant; he smote it with all his might; the adamant powdered where he struck, but the sword brake not, nor lost its edge. And when he could no more lift the sword, his heart smote him that he had tried to break the holy blade; and he said, 'O Durendal, I am to blame; the angels gave thee; they will keep thee safe for Charles and France!'

Then Roland, when he felt death creep upon him, lay down and set his face toward Spain and toward his enemies, that men should plainly see he fell a conqueror. Beneath him he put the sword and horn; then having made his peace with God, he lay a-thinking. He thought of his master Charles who had nurtured him from a little child, and his face was all a-glow with pride. 'He will see that I have rendered good account.' He thought of sweet France and his home that was so dear. He thought of his dear maid, Hilda, who would weep and cry for him. Very sad and tender grew his heart. Then lifted he his weary hands to Heaven and closed his eyes; and whilst he mused God sent His swift archangels, Gabriel and Michael, to bear his soul to Paradise.

Gloom fell; the mists went up, and there was only death and silence in the valley. The low red sun was setting in the west.

Charles and his host rode hard, and drew not rein until they reached the mountain top, and looked down on the valley of Roncesvalles. They blew the clarions, but there was no sound, neither any that answered save the ringing mountain sides. Then down through gloom and mist they rode, and saw the field; saw Roland dead, and Oliver; the archbishop and the twelve valiant peers, and every man of the twenty thousand chosen guard; saw how fiercely they had fought, how hard they died.

There was not one in all the king's host but lifted up his voice and wept for pity at the sight they saw.

But Charles the King is fallen on his face on Roland's body, with a great and exceeding bitter cry. No word he spake, but only lay and moaned upon the dead that was so passing dear to him.

Charles was an old man when he took the babe Roland from his mother's arms. He had brought him up and nourished him

had taught him war, and watched him grow the bravest knight, the staunchest captain of his host. Right gladly would he have given Spain and the fruits of all the seven years' war to have Roland back again. Tears came, but brought no words; and God sent sleep to comfort him for his heaviness. And while the king slumbered, the angel Gabriel came and strengthened him, and showed what should shortly come to pass, and bade him rise and follow after the pagans. The king arose and saw that the low red sun was not yet set; for God made a miracle in the firmament, so that the sun stood still in the heavens, and went not down till he was avenged of his enemies. Duke Naymes said, 'Coming down the pass I saw a cloud of dust across the mountains on the other side. That was the pagan host fleeing to Zaragoz.' Then having watered and pastured their horses, the king left four good knights in Roncesvalles to guard the dead from birds and beasts of prey, and set out in chase of the pagans.

In the Vale of Tenèbrus the Franks overtook them, hard by the broad, swift river Ebro. There being hemmed in, the river in front and the fierce Franks behind, the pagans were cut to pieces; not one escaped, save Marsilius and a little band who had taken another way and got safe to Zaragoz. Thence Marsilius sent letters to Baligant, King of Babylon, who ruled forty kingdoms, praying him to come over and help him. And Baligant gathered a mighty great army and put off to sea to come to Marsilius.

But King Charles went straightway back to Roncesvalles to bury the dead. He summoned thither his bishops and abbots and canons to say mass for the souls of his guard and to burn incense of myrrh and antimony round about. But he would by no means lay Roland and Oliver and Turpin in the earth. Wherefore he caused their bodies to be embalmed and washed with wine and piment, that he might have them ever before his eyes; and he arrayed them in stuffs of great price and laid them in three coffins of white marble, and chose out the three richest chariots that he had and placed the coffins in them, that they might go with him whithersoever he went.

Now after this Marsilius and Baligant came out to battle with King Charles before the walls of Zaragoz. But the king utterly destroyed the pagans there and slew King Baligant and King Marsilius, and brake down the gates of Zaragoz and took the city. So he conquered Spain and avenged himself for Roland and his guard.

But when King Charles would go back again to France his heart grew exceeding heavy. He said, 'O Roland, my good friend, I have no more pleasure in this land which we have conquered. When I come again to Laon, to my palace, and men ask tidings, they will hear how many cities and kingdoms we have taken; but no man will rejoice. They will say, Count Roland our good Captain is dead, and great sadness will fall on all the realm. O Roland, my friend, when I come again to Aachen, to my chapel, and men ask tidings, they will hear that we have won a land and lost the best captain in all France; and they will weep and mourn, and say the war has been in vain. O Roland, my friend, would God that I had died for thee!'

Now when the people of France heard how King Charles the Great returned victorious, they gathered together in great multitudes to welcome him. And when Hilda, the fair maid whom Roland loved, heard it, she arrayed herself in her richest apparel and tired her hair with eager pains, and proudly decked herself with her jewels. For she said, 'I would be pleasing in the eyes of my brave true captain who comes home to wed with me. To-day I am his bride! There is no gladder heart in France than mine. Who will not envy me, the bride of the brave captain whose name will be on every lip to-day?' Then she hasted and came merrily to the palace. And the king's guards all drew back for fear and let her pass, for they dared not speak a word to her. Right proudly walked she through them, for she thought, 'This honour is all for Roland's sake;' and proudly came she to the king, saying—'Roland, the captain of the host, where is he? Seven long years have I waited, so patiently, while he fought the battles of the king. I never murmured; no, I am too proud of him and of France and of the king. But to-day he is mine. The king will give him to me to-day.'

And Charles feared exceedingly and scarce could see for tears. He said, 'Dear sister, sweet friend, am I God that I can bring the dead back? Roland my nephew is dead; Roland my captain and my friend is dead. Nay, take time and mourn with us all, and when thy heart is healed I will give thee Ludwig mine own son, who will sit after me upon the throne. Take Ludwig in his stead.'

But God is kind: He takes the broken-hearted home.

Hilda cried not, nor uttered sound. The colour faded from her face, and straightway she fell dead at the king's feet.

Charles and his barons wept for pity at her doleful case: and the king came down from his throne and lifted the maiden in his

arms and laid her head upon his shoulder. And when he found of a truth that death had taken the gentle maid, he called four countesses and bade them see that she was interred right worshipfully. They made a noble bier and lifted Hilda thereupon and bore her to a nunnery. They set it in the midst of the chancel, that so she might lie there in her robes and jewels as she died; and all that night they sang sweet masses for her soul's good rest. At prime they buried her beneath the altar pavement.

It is written in the old chronicle, that after these things Charles sent and summoned many men from many lands to come and try if Ganelon had done him a treason or no; for the twenty thousand who were betrayed being dead and the pagans utterly destroyed, there was none left to bear witness against him. So the king sent and fetched Ganelon up out of prison and set him on his trial. Howbeit Ganelon contrived to get thirty of his kinsfolk chosen among his judges, and chief of them Pinabel, a man of great stature and strength of limb. Moreover, Pinabel was a ready man to pick a quarrel with any; a man cunning of tongue and very rich and powerful, so that people feared him greatly. These thirty Ganelon bribed, with part of the price he took from King Marsilius for the treason, to give judgment for him. Then Pinabel and the others went to and fro among the judges and persuaded them, saying—'We have no witnesses, only Ganelon himself, and what saith he? He owns he hated Roland, and for that cause he challenged Roland, in presence of the king and all his court, to fight when he returned from his mission. The open challenger is not the betrayer in secret. Moreover, had he done this thing, would Ganelon have come back again to King Charles? Besides, would any man betray an army of his friends to rid himself of a single enemy? Blood enough has been shed. Slaying Ganelon will not bring Roland back. The Franks are angry since they have lost their captain, and blindly clamour for a victim. Heed not their foolish cry, for Ganelon has done no treason.' To this the others all agreed, save Tierry, the son of Duke Geoffrey; and he would not.

The judges came to King Charles and said, 'We find that Ganelon has done nothing worthy of death. Let him live and take anew the oath of fealty to France and the king.' Then the king was grieved, and said, 'It misgives me you have played me false. In my esteem the judgment is not just. Nevertheless, it is judgment: only God can alter it.'

Then stepped forth the youth Tierry, Geoffrey's son. He was

but a lad, very little and slender of body, and slight of limb. And he said, 'Let not the king be sad. I Tierry do impeach Ganelon as a felon and a traitor who betrayed Roland and the rear-guard to the pagans, and I also say that thirty of Ganelon's kinsfolk have wrought treason and corrupted judgment. And this will I maintain with my sword, and prove upon the body of any man who will come to defend him or them.' Thereto to pledge himself he drew off his right glove and gave it to the king for a gage.

Pinabel strode forward, a giant among the throng. He looked down upon the lad Tierry and despised him; he came to the king and gave his glove, saying, 'I will fight this battle to the death.' The Franks pitied Tierry and feared for him, for they had hoped Naymes or Olger or some mighty champion would have undertaken the cause, and not a stripling. But Charles the King said, 'God will show the right.' So they made ready the lists for the wager of battle; and the king commanded Ganelon and his thirty kinsmen to be held in pledge against the issue.

The battle was done in a green meadow near to Aachen in presence of the king and his barons and a great multitude of people. First the men rode together and tilted till their spears brake and the saddle-girths gave way; then they left their steeds and fought on foot. Tierry was wondrous quick and agile, and wearied Pinabel at the outset by his swift sword-play; but Tierry's hand was weak against his sturdy adversary, and his sword point pierced not mail nor shield. Pinabel clave his helm and hewed great pieces off his mail, but could not slay him. Then said Pinabel, 'Fool, why should I kill thee? Give up the battle and the cause, and I will be thy man henceforth in faith and fealty. It shall prove greatly for thy profit to reconcile Ganelon and the king.'

Tierry answered, 'I will not parley; God will surely show whether of us twain be right! Guard thyself.' So they fell to again and all men saw that nothing would now part them till one was dead; and straightway they gave the lad Tierry up for lost. Pinabel's sword was heavy, and great the strength of his arm. He smote Tierry a blow upon the helm that sliced off visor and ventailles and with it the youth's right cheek. But while his blood ran down upon the grass, Tierry lifted up his sword and struck the brown steel helm of Pinabel. God put His might into the young man's arm, for the blade cleft steel and skull, and entered Pinabel's brain, so that he reeled and dropped down dead. Then all the people shouted, 'God hath spoken! Away with Ganelon and his fellows!'

Then King Charles raised up his hands to heaven and gave thanks, and taking Tierry in his arms embraced him for joy, and with his own hands took off his armour, and he set the noblest in the land to tend his wounds.

King Charles sat in judgment in his palace at Aachen. He said, 'Take the thirty kinsmen of Ganelon, perverters of justice, let not one escape, and hang them.' Blithely the Franks obeyed his word.

Then the king commanded four horses to be brought. And they tied ropes round Ganelon's wrists and ankles, and harnessed the horses to them. The traitor lay and whined and begged for life with tears and promises and cries. But the very steeds arched up their necks in pride to do a pleasant work. No whip they needed, but only to be loosed, and quick they tare the traitor limb from limb upon the grass. So died Ganelon as he lived, a coward. Thus Charles the King made an end of his vengeance for his guard.

Now after these things were accomplished, and when Charles was grown very old and decrepit and the years fell heavy on him, the angel Gabriel came to the king as he slept, saying, 'Arise and go into Syria to succour King Vivian, for the pagans do hard beset him!' Charles sat up in his bed and sighed, 'Have pity on thy servant! So weary is my life; and I would fain go home to God.'

The old king wept and feebly plucked his snowy beard.

This is the gest which Turold used to sing.

When William the Norman fought at Hastings, Taillefer his minstrel, who sang full well, rode on before the Norman host and sang of Roland and Great Charles—of Oliver and the brave rear-guard which fell in Roncesvalles.

Olger the Dane.

THERE was weeping in the palace of Godfrey King of Denmark; for the queen whom he dearly loved had died in giving birth to a son; and all the people mourned, both high and low; for she was a good queen, beautiful and royal among the noble ladies of the court and kind and tender to the poor. They took the babe from his dead mother's arms at midnight, and having named him Olger, carried him into another chamber and laid him on a richly quilted bed of down. Presently there was a gentle rustling in the room, and lo! there appeared about the bed six shining fairies whose beauty was so awful and so wonderful that none but a child might gaze upon them without fear. One of the fairies, named Glorian, drawing near took the boy in her arms and kissed him, saying, 'I give you to be the strongest and bravest knight of all your time.' Another, called Palestina, said, 'And I will always give you battles to fight.' Faramond, the third fairy, said, 'No man shall ever conquer him.' And Meliora gave him 'to be always sweet and gentle;' and Pristina, 'that he should be dear to all women, and happy in his love.' Then Morgan le Fay, which was queen of them all, took the child and held him long against her breast for the great love she bare him. She said, 'Sweet one, there scarce remains a gift for me to give you after all my sisters have promised, yet I give you this: that you shall never die, but after you have lived a life of glory on the earth you shall be mine, and I will bring you home to dwell with me for ever in Avalon, the land of Faery.' And the lady having kissed him many times put the child back upon the bed; and all the fairies fled away into the air and the room was dark again.

Olger grew up a brave child, tall, and strong in his limbs and very comely, so that when he was ten years old there was none like him for beauty and strength, for Nature seemed to have lavished all her treasures on him.

Now Godfrey King of Denmark was a bold and haughty prince who stood in fear of no man, and it befell when messengers came from France summoning him to do homage to the emperor Charles the Great for his lands, that Godfrey returned

for answer, 'Tell Charles I hold my lands of God and my good sword, and if he doubt it let him come and see. I will not do him homage.' Wherefore Charles came up against him with a mighty army, and after a long and stout resistance King Godfrey being defeated was obliged to promise to appear before the emperor every Easter and pay his allegiance. As a pledge that he would keep his word, the emperor required him to give up Olger his son for a hostage. To this Godfrey having agreed, Olger was carried away to the emperor's court, where he was instructed in all the arts of the time; and the emperor was very glad to have so fearless and handsome a youth in his retinue.

For three years the King of Denmark came faithfully to pay his court as he had promised, but in the fourth year Eastertide went by and Godfrey did not come; the truth being that he was married again and had another son, and the new queen wrought upon her husband's pride, persuading him not to humble himself any more before King Charles; for she thought, 'When the emperor finds he no longer pays homage Olger surely will be put to death, and so my son shall inherit the throne of Denmark.' As his father did not redeem his word Olger was committed to prison in the Castle of St Omer to wait while messengers went to Godfrey to find the reason of his breaking faith. But Olger was kindly treated by the castle-keeper, for he found favour in the eyes of his wife, and especially in those of Bellisande, his fair daughter, who loved him from the moment that she saw him. So instead of being cast into the dungeon, Olger was placed in the best apartments of the castle, richly hung with tapestry, and was waited upon like a prince; and Bellisande could no more keep her eyes from regarding him or her heart from going out towards him than the lily can help holding its cups out to get their fill of sunshine.

But Godfrey of Denmark entreated the messengers shamefully. He slit their ears and noses, shaved their heads, and sent them home disgraced. Wherefore these men returned to their master, and coming before Charles all marred and disfigured as they were, cried loudly for vengeance against Godfrey and against his son Olger that was held as hostage. The emperor then sent orders to the castle to slay Olger instantly; but the kind-hearted castle-keeper begged that at least the lad might first be brought before him and told why, innocent, he yet must suffer death. So, being brought to the emperor at a time when he feasted among his nobles, Olger came with much gentleness and kneeled meekly at his feet. Seeing the lad thus abase himself for his father's pride,

the emperor was moved with pity, and would fain have spared his life; but the messengers cried out for vengeance, and would have fallen on him themselves had not Duke Naymes of Bayiere pleaded for the boy and kept them back. Then Olger said, 'Sire, you know that I am innocent of blame, having always rendered you obedience. Let me not suffer for my father's fault; but seeing I am his true heir, deign to receive from me the vassalage and homage he denies,—that by a life of service in your cause I may atone for him. As for your noble messengers, so cruelly ill-used, I will seek from this hour to repair their disgrace and take upon me to atone for all my father's misdeeds against them and you, if you but spare my life and use it in your service.'

Now while the barons interceded for the lad, a knight rode up the hall in haste. 'Tidings, King Charles!' he cried,—'evil tidings, alas! The Soudan and the Grand Turk Corsuble, and Dannemont his son, with King Caraheu have taken Rome by assault. Ovand the Pope, the cardinals and legates, all have fled; the churches are destroyed; the holy relics lost, all save the body of St. Peter; and the Christians put to the sword. Wherefore the Holy Father charges you as Christian king and pillar of the faith to march to succour of the Church!'

Then Duke Naymes of Bayiere prayed to take Olger as his squire into the battle, offering to go bail for him in all his lands and hold himself a prisoner in his stead, if the lad should flee. Thereto the emperor having consented, straightway prepared his army for battle, swearing by his sceptre that he would never return till Rome should be restored to the Christians. But Olger first went back to the castle and wedded the beautiful Bellisande. When she wept at his departure, Olger said, 'Leave these tears, for God has given me life and you have given me love; gifts that will strengthen me to do great deeds of arms.' So he rode off with the host, with Naymes and his two brothers Geoffrey and Gautier; and they journeyed till they came to Rome and encamped upon a hill before the city walls with an army of two hundred thousand men.

Now the Paynim host came out from Rome to fight the Franks upon the plain. Olger, bewildered and amazed to see the great crowds of knights in glittering armour, and the banners, and to hear for the first time the din of war, would fain have gone with Naymes and his brothers into the fight; but they forbade him, charging him to remain among the tents.

Looking down upon the battle from the hill, Olger watched

the hosts and tracked the standard of King Charles as it moved to the front. He saw the armies come together with a shout and join in battle with a noise that rent the air. But in a little while the standard wavered; then it fell, then rose again; and then he saw King Charles's own company of knights repulsed, while Sir Alory that bare the standard turned and fled for very life upon his horse. Seizing a battle-axe Olger ran down into the plain, caught the bridle of Alory's horse, and smote down the standard-bearer in his flight, saying, 'Coward, go home with all the speed you may! Live among monks and women there. But leave the noble banner, Refuge of France, with me!' Olger quickly disarmed the frightened and trembling Alory, got a squire to dress him in the standard bearer's armour, leapt on a horse, and sword at breast, banner in hand, galloped to the battle with the fierceness of a lion, hewed his way through the Paynim to the thickest of the fight, and finding Naymes and many nobles held prisoners behind the pagan ranks, cut his way through to them, loosed their bonds, and cut a road back again for him and them. Wherever he went about the field Olger reaped among the enemy till he ramparted himself within a wall of slain. Hearing the king cry out for help, he leapt his steed out from a wall of dead and spurred to where he was. The king was down, Dannemont had killed his horse under him and pressed him sore on every side. But Olger, though he had but one fighting hand, since he bare the standard in the other, rode upon the Paynim and quickly carved out a clear space about the king while he mounted a fresh horse. And in like manner three times he saved the life of Charles. Then with Olger and the standard at their head the king and all his host shouting their battle-cry, 'Montjoy!' charged on the Paynim, routed them, and drove them to the city gates.

After this King Charles commanded the standard-bearer to be brought before him; but he wist not it was Olger in Alory's armour, for his visor was down. Then said the emperor, 'Alory, I thank you heartily for this day's work, and though I know not what should have made you flee at the outset, you have redeemed your honour nobly. I cannot tell how to reward you. Choose any province in my kingdom and I will make you ruler of it; and you shall be my lieutenant to do battle for me in all disputes touching the crown of France, O brave and fearless Alory!' And he wept for joy that God had sent him such a champion. But a squire that stood by, being surprised to hear the king speak thus of Alory, said, 'Sire, he is not on the field. Alory

bowed the colours and fled at the first to save his skin, whilst as for this knight, who seized the standard from Alory's hands, I helped to dress him in Alory's armour, but I wot not who he is.' Then Olger lifted his helmet, and kneeling to the king said, 'Have pity, sire, on Godfrey King of Denmark, and let his son atone for his offence and be your faithful vassal in his stead.' And the king answered, 'You have altogether turned into love the anger which I bare against you and your father. I give you your request. Wherefore rise Sir Olger, Champion for France and Charles, and God be with you.' Thus Olger received the accolade upon the battle-field, and all the peers of France came to salute him and to render thanks for their deliverance. Then, flushed with his new-made knighthood, Sir Olger sped like an arrow against the foe and fought with a courage surmounting mortal fear. Bearing the standard aloft he made it terrible to the enemy, insomuch that the Paynim withdrew the length of a bowshot before the wind of his sword and the trampling of his steed. And wheresoever the Franks fell in disorder, or wavering turned to flee, a knight upon a great horse would surely ride into their midst and do such mighty deeds that they turned to see for very wonderment, and scarce believed him mortal, till knowing their brave champion, they would cry with a great shout 'Olger the Dane!' and fearless in his company, charge mightily upon the foe.

Sadonne rode from the Paynim camp to bid Dannemont hold the field, since Caraheu, Emperor of India, with thirty kings, was coming to his help. He met the Paynim army coming towards him in full flight, crying out in panic—'Save yourselves, for Michael the Archangel fights against us!'

And he saw the terrible knight on the tall horse, and threw down his arms and begged for life.

'Who are you, that I should grant it?' said Sir Olger.

He answered, 'My master is Caraheu, Emperor of Upper India, and I am Sadonne, his admiral, cousin to King Corsuble.'

Then said Sir Olger, 'I grant your life on one condition: bear Caraheu my challenge to fight with me in single combat, and so determine all the issue of the war.'

Next day came Caraheu with a stately retinue to the pavilion of King Charles, bearing in his train the beauteous Gloriande, Corsuble's daughter, the fairest woman of the East. Her hair flowed in a golden shower to her feet, and a jewelled circle of rare workmanship bound it about her temples. She wore a dress of pure white damask sewn with pearls, a wonder of the weaver's art, which took nine years to weave.

Then said Caraheu the Emperor—'I seek Olger the Dane, who has demanded single combat. I accept his challenge, and I bring fair Gloriande, my promised bride, a noble prize for victory.'

But the son of King Charles, Charlot, being envious of Sir Olger, said, 'It is not meet, great Caraheu, that you should battle with my father's bondsman, but rather with me.'

Caraheu answered, 'I fight not braggarts, but men. Sir Olger is a king of men, far nobler than a mere king of land.'

'Noble enemy,' answered Olger, 'your words make me grieve to fight against you rather than at your side. Yet Charlot is the emperor's son, and worthy to joust with the bravest.'

'He shall tourney with Sadonne, my admiral,' said Caraheu, 'but I will fight with you alone.'

Thus a double combat was arranged, and they went to an isle to fight, and Gloriande with them, that her eyes might strengthen them to battle for such a prize. But Dannemont the Paynim treacherously hid three hundred men among the bushes to lie in wait. Caraheu's shield bore, on a field argent, four bands azure with the figure of Mahound upon a scutcheon gules. Sir Olger's shield was white with a black eagle thereupon. Bravely they fought for half a day, and long the victory seemed to waver between these two redoubtable champions. Meanwhile Sadonne killed Charlot's horse, and then honourably dismounted from his own to fight on equal terms; but Charlot made a feint of fighting till he brought himself to where Sadonne's steed was; then leaping on it, basely fled.

Caraheu's good sword, Courtain, of marvellous temper, cut through Olger's shield and armour. Nevertheless at last the Dane by great strength bore Caraheu to the ground, and got him at his mercy; but still he admired the Indian monarch's courtesy and courage so much that he would not slay him. Then Dannemont with Corsuble and his men seeing their champion down, rushed from their hiding place and assailed Sir Olger; whereat Caraheu, being very wroth at their treachery, fought beside Sir Olger, crying, 'Traitors, better death than shame like this!' So the enemies of an hour before became brothers in arms for honour's sake, and between them slew a hundred of their common foes. Howbeit they were overpowered by numbers, and Sir Olger owed his life to Gloriande's pleading. He was led away to prison loaded with chains. In vain did Dannemont and Corsuble seek to reconcile Caraheu, their great ally, to their treasonable act. Caraheu, though he had to leave Gloriande whom he

loved, went over with all his host to King Charles, and joined with him to gain redress from the Paynim for Olger's seizure.

But Gloriande came secretly to Olger in his prison, loosed his chains, and set him free. So he escaped to King Charles and Caraheu. After that together they fought the Paynim till they discomfited them; and Rome being freed, the Pope returned to the city with his cardinals and legates, and Holy Church was stablished firm again. Olger with his own hand rescued Gloriande, and gave her into Caraheu's hands to be his wife. So they were wed and baptised in Rome; and the Indian emperor returned to his empire a Christian, with a Christian wife. But first he gave Sir Olger the famed Damascus sword, Courtain, saying, 'You conquered me in fight and won my life and also my bride, and yet you gave both back to me. Take therefore this sword, offered in friendly homage, as a pledge that I owe you all.'

Then Olger came to France with King Charles, and found his wife had died in giving birth to a son named Baldwin. And Baldwin was dear to Olger, and the child's prattle very grateful to his ears for Bellisande's sweet sake.

Now the Paynim had come down on Denmark, seizing on all the land save only Mayence, where King Godfrey was besieged and suffered famine. And the queen said, 'Surely this misery is come on us for Olger's sake whom we abandoned.' And being brought very low with hunger and distress, at last they wrote a letter to King Charles, praying him to overlook the past, and in pity send them succour lest they die. But Charles said coldly, 'Nay—since Godfrey holds his lands of God and his good sword, let him hold them. I will not raise a finger for his help;' and straitly forbade that any knight about his court should go to succour them on pain of death. Then turning to Olger he said—'You would not wish to aid a traitor who has thrown off my yoke, insulted me, and who, moreover, left you selfishly to suffer for his crimes?' But Olger bending before Charles the King, answered—'Sire, I kneel as vassal to my king, but Godfrey is my father and I go. The king will not forbid a son his duty.'

Then said Charles, 'Go—but go alone, saving your own servants. Mine shall not fight in a rebel's cause.'

So Olger hastened to Mayence with only thirty of his servants. And when he reached the city walls he found a battle raging; for King Godfrey had made a desperate sally against his enemies and thrown them into disorder, but was fallen in the fray pierced with many wounds, and the Danes were fighting for his lifeless body. Olger with his little band rode into the battle with his

sword Courtain, and where he passed he left a lane hedged up with bodies upon either side, whilst the Danes, rejoicing at so good a succour, with his help put the Paynims to the rout, nor ceased pursuit till all their enemies were either slain or driven from the land. So Olger was made King of Denmark in his father's stead, and remained five years in that country till he had founded a wise government and made good laws for the people. Then he returned to France and came kneeling to the emperor at Eastertide, saying, 'Godfrey's son, of his own free will, thus pays his homage to King Charles for all the land of Denmark.' So he grew in greater favour than ever with the emperor.

One day Baldwin, his son, now grown a pretty, fair-haired boy and general favourite, played chess with Charlot, whom, having fool's-mated, he bantered on the game. The prince, ever jealous of the father, and now stung by the son's playful triumph, flew in a passion, and with the heavy chess-board beat out his brains.

Bitterly Olger wept when he returned from hunting, to find the son he left so full of life and frolic but an hour before, struck down by a murderer's hand. Taking the body in his arms, and covering it with tears and kisses, he came to King Charles and laid it at his feet.

'Sire,' said he, 'look upon your son's foul work.'

'Truly,' answered the emperor, 'I grieve for you, Sir Olger, and would give half my kingdom to blot out the deed. But there is no repayment for so great a loss.' Said Olger, 'There is no repayment, but there is punishment; and I demand to fight with your son to avenge my poor boy's death.'

'Nay, Olger, have pity;' said the emperor, 'spare my son. How could he fight with you and have a bare chance of his life?'

'What of that?' returned the knight bitterly. 'Would he have more chance with the headsman if he met his rightful doom upon the public block? What is your son more than mine? Deliver him to me.'

'I cannot,' answered the king.

'Then, sire, till you learn justice we will part'—and Olger turned upon his heel and left the court, and came to Didier, King of Lombardy, who made war against King Charles, and fought for him.

It was in Lombardy that Olger got his faithful squire Benoist, a steadfast knight, who held his life cheap in his master's cause. Followed only by Benoist, Sir Olger battled long upon the Lombard side against King Charles and his host. Where men would send a troop to reinforce a flagging portion of the army, Sir Olger

and his squire rode forth alone. Wherever went the black eagle on the argent shield, the Lombards rallied, and the Franks fell back in terror; for a line of slain was the war-track of the Dane, and where men massed the thickest there he rode and made them fall like ripened sheaves before his sword Courtain. All the Franks feared to see their champion thus arrayed against them, and murmured loudly against the king for letting him depart.

It was a long warfare, wherein the Lombards fought their way on from place to place; and the Franks, being always worsted before the mighty Dane, schemed how they might take him by subtlety. Archbishop Turpin with a little band of men came on him by a fountain lying wearily asleep after a battle, his arms flung here and there upon the grass, and his great black charger Broiefort turned loose to graze. One seized his helm, another his sword Courtain, while others bare away his lance and shield, and bound him, while he still slept heavily from great fatigue.

King Charles would have slain Olger, both because he fought against him, beating down the flower of his chivalry, and because he feared his vengeance against Charlot his son. But Archbishop Turpin said, 'Nay—it was for the sake of France and Christendom I lent myself to surprise in bonds the noblest knight that ever wielded sword; but for the sake of France and Christendom his life must not be lost. Howbeit since I took him, let me guard him safe in prison so he may do no further hurt against the cause, and I will be his bond.' Then Turpin took Olger to his castle, where he treated him with great kindness, holding him prisoner only on parole.

Now Achar, King of England, landed in France with Clarice his daughter to do homage for his crown to the emperor; but Bruhier, a Saracen giant, with a mighty army coming to make war on France, seized them before they could reach the court, and marched to battle against Charles.

Long time they fought, but Charles's army was put to the worse and fled before the giant and his host, till fearing any more to go against the Saracens, the Franks called on the emperor to send for Olger the Dane from his prison. So he went himself and intreated him to come to their succour. But Olger would not until the emperor should first deliver up his son Charlot into his hand. This for a long time he would not do, but at last his army clamoured at him, saying, 'Have you no care nor thought for us that we die by thousands in a hopeless fight? What is one life to thousands?' So Charles was fain to give up his son. Charlot begged in vain for mercy, for Olger remembered but his

fair-haired child and how his life was cruelly beaten out. So taking the prince by the hair he drew Courtain and raised his arm to strike. Then a voice fell from the sky and the place was lightened round about, 'Olger, stay thy hand! Slay not the son of the king!' All heard the voice and feared greatly, and Olger's hand fell to his side without striking. Then Charles embraced him and rendered thanks to Olger. 'Thank heaven, not me,' said the Dane, 'I do but bow to its will.' So they were made friends.

Then Olger grieved for his sword Courtain and his good horse Broiefort, and said he would not go out to battle till these were restored to him. Archbishop Turpin brought the sword, which had been carefully preserved, but the horse had not been seen for seven years, and was believed to be dead. Then the emperor sent for his own charger, but Olger, by leaning on the crupper, broke the horse's back; and ten other of the best horses that could be found fell beneath the burly knight as he mounted them. Then Olger said he must go afoot. But a certain canon said he had seen the horse Broiefort dragging blocks of stone for the Abbey of St Meaux; and Duke Naymes and Archbishop Turpin went with a retinue to beg the horse back. They found him a mere skeleton, with the hair worn off his flanks, his tail shorn to the stump, his skin galled by the shafts, yet drawing a load such as four horses could not move. But when they brought him to Olger, the knight leaned upon his crupper, and the good horse yielded not, but strengthened himself to the weight, and remembering his master he neighed and snorted with joy, and scratched with his feet, and lay down humbly before him, till Olger and Charles and all the barony wept at the sight.

Then Olger went to battle against Bruhier, and with him for their champion the Franks had no fear. Victory followed where he led. Sometimes, amazed, both friends and foes paused in the midst of conflict, wonderstruck to see his valiant deeds. He routed the Saracens and slew the giant Bruhier, and rescued the Princess Clarice, whom her father gave to Olger for his wife. So they were wed and went to England, where Achar gave up his crown to his deliverer, and made him King of Britain. But in one of his battles his faithful horse Broiefort was killed under him, and Olger grieved for him for the rest of his life, even as he had grieved for his son Baldwin. Olger reigned in Britain many years with his wife Clarice, till, being tired of peace, he went and fought the battles of the Cross in Palestine. There Caraheu the emperor joined him, and they overthrew King Moysant, and

the Soudan Moradin and his brother Branquemond; none could stand against the spear of the knight on the great horse who bore the black-eagle shield. There Olger fought till he grew old and grey; yet waxed not his arm feeble, nor wearied he in fight; men still fell thick before his sword Courtain, and where he went still panic spread among his foes, and fearless courage filled the breasts of all his friends. He took Acre, Babylon, and Jerusalem, of all which cities he was made king; but he gave them to his kinsmen to rule in his stead, for he would fain see Charles the Great and his court again. So with a mighty retinue and accompanied by Caraheu and a fleet of vessels he set sail for France.

But a storm came down upon the sea and drave the ships hither and thither, at mercy of wind and wave, till they were parted one from another; and Olger's vessel, mast, oars, and sail being carried away, was driven far out of its course into strange seas, where an unseen current drew it swiftly through the billowy foam and crashed the ship at last against a reef of loadstone rock. The mariners all leaped overboard, seeking in vain to climb the slippery rocks: the angry surf whirled the strong swimmers up and beat them lifeless on the reef. Sir Olger stood alone at night upon the sinking ship, looking out on the black tempest and the hurtling sea. He bared his head and drew his sword Courtain, which having kissed upon the hilt, he offered thanks to heaven for the might and courage granted him through life; then with an unblenched cheek awaited death.

Presently he heard a voice in the air cry, 'Olger, I wait for thee. Fear not the waves, but come!' Then he cast himself into the sea, and a great wave bore him on its crest high up in air and placed him safely on the rocks. A strange light showed a narrow pathway among the crags, which Olger followed, walking towards the brightness till he reached a shining palace, invisible by day, but which at night glows into mortal ken—a palace of ivory and gold and ebony, glorious to behold, its halls made fair with imagery—and therein was set a banquet of most rare and dainty meats. None dwelt within this palace save a fairy horse, named Papillon, who motioned Olger to the banquet, and having brought water in a golden ewer that he might cleanse his hands, served humbly beside the knight at table till he had finished his repast. Then Papillon carried him to a bed whose pillars held golden candlesticks wherein tall tapers burned through the night. There Olger slept. But in the morning when he woke the palace had waned away in the dawn, and he was lying in a garden where

the trees are always green, and the flowers fade not, and the summer never dies; where the sun goes not down, and the soft sweet sky is never darkened with storm; a garden in the Vale of Avalon, the land of Faery. And whilst his eyes were yet dazzled in wonderment, there stood suddenly at his side Morgan le Fay, queen of the faeries, clothed in a shining white kirtle, who said, 'Welcome, dear knight, to Avalon. A weary time have I longed and waited for thy coming. Now thou art mine; my lord, my love. So let the restless ages roll, and the world totter and decay! We will dream on for ever in this changeless vale.' Then she put an enchanted ring upon his hand; so the years slipped from his shoulders and he stood before her in prime of youth and vigour. And she placed upon his brow a priceless golden crown of myrtle leaves and laurel, a crown no mortal treasure would suffice to buy—the Crown of Forgetfulness. Then Olger remembered no more the things which were past. His old loves, toils and battles faded from his mind; and in place of a dead memory a living love was given him, and he loved the fairy queen, and he was hers and she was his. Then she brought him to a palace where he found King Arthur healed of his wound, with whom he talked of knightly deeds and often rode with him in friendly jousts against the forms of Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristrem, or the shapes of great giants and dragons which Morgan le Fay and her brother Oberon raised up by enchantment for their pastime.

Thus dwelt Sir Olger in a faery dream of love and pleasure in the land where there is no death and no time. And thus two hundred years passed by, like yesterday to him dreaming in the faery's lap.

But France fell into trouble. The enemy were on her soil. Battle raged, but there was none to lead her armies forth to victory. Chivalry was either dead or slept. On every side the Franks were beaten by their foes and driven back by Paynim and by Saracen, until it seemed that they would be blotted out from among the peoples of the world; and they cried for a deliverer. Morgan le Fay heard and pitied them; and though it grieved her sore to part with her own dear knight, she said, 'Olger must go back to battle again, for France and Christendom!' So she went to him and said,

'Dear one, do you know how long you have dwelt with me?'

'A week, a month, a year, perchance,' he answered, with a smile and kiss—'one does not reckon time in Paradise.'

Then she lifted the crown of forgetfulness from his brow, and his memory came again.

'I must go back,' he cried, upstarting like one new wakened from a dream—'I have tarried here too long. Clarice will wonder why I stay, and Caraheu will think me wrecked. Peradventure Charles, my master, calls for Olger, and calls in vain. My sword, my horse, my spear! O let me go, sweet queen. Yet tell me, have I dwelt long in this fair garden?'

'Not long to me, dear knight—but you shall go,' she answered.

Then Morgan le Fay raised up his dead squire, Benoist, and brought his sword Courtain, and led forth Papillon for his steed.

'Guard well the ring upon your hand,' she said, 'for, wearing it, your youth and vigour will not fade.' She brought him moreover a torch, saying—'See that you kindle it not, so shall you live for ever; but if by mischance it should break out and burn, cherish the fire with care, for the measure of your days is the last spark of the torch.'

Then she threw a spell upon them all that they slept the while she carried them through the air to France. And when Sir Olger awoke he found himself lying by a fountain, his arms and armour at his side, and Benoist holding Papillon ready for him to mount: and all his life in Avalon seemed but a night's dream. Leaping to horse they rode into a city.

'What city is this?' asked Olger of a horseman whom he overtook.

'Montpellier, Sir Knight.'

'Oh, yes,' said the Dane, 'but I had forgotten. In truth I ought to know Montpellier well enough, for a kinsman of mine is governor of the city,' and he named the man he thought still ruled it.

'You are pleased to jest,' the horseman answered—'there was a governor of the city of that name two hundred years ago—the present governor is Regnier. But the man you speak of was a romance writer, wherefore I see you jest in claiming kinship with him. I need not tell you that he wrote the romance of Olger the Dane; a good story, though few believe it now, except perchance a man who goes about the city very often singing it, and picks up money from the crowd.'

The horseman slackened his pace a little till Benoist came up with him.

'Who is your master?' he whispered.

'Sir,' said the faithful squire, 'surely you must know him? He is Olger the Dane.'

'You malapert,' said the horseman, 'Olger the Dane perished in shipwreck two hundred years ago, and but for courtesy to the

chevalier your master, I would make you pay dearly for jesting with me!'

Then the Dane and his squire rode on to the market-place of Meaux, where they stopped at the door of an inn which Olger well remembered.

'Can we lodge here?' he asked.

'Certainly, Sir Knight,' answered the innkeeper, 'and be well treated.'

'But I wish to see the landlord.'

'Sir?' said the innkeeper. 'I am the landlord.'

'Nay, nay,' answered Olger, 'but I want to see Hubert the Neapolitan who keeps this house.'

The man looked at him for a minute, and seeing the knight's countenance remain serious, he thought him nothing less than a madman. So he shut the door in his face, and having barred it, ran to an upper window and shouted into the street—'Here is a man who wishes to speak with Hubert, my grandfather's grandfather, who has been dead two hundred years. Seize him! He is mad or possessed with a devil. Send for the Abbot of St Faron to come and cast out the evil spirit!'

A great crowd gathered about the inn and set upon the knight and his squire, harassing them with stones and darts; and an archer shot at Benoist and killed him. Then Sir Olger, grieving for the death of his squire, turned upon the crowd in fierce anger and leaped Papillon into their midst and cut them down on all sides till he had scattered from the market-place all those that were not dead upon its pavement. But so hotly burned his wrath that it kindled the torch he bare in his breast; wherefore he rode with it to the church of Saint Faron of Meaux. There the abbot met him.

Olger said, 'Is your name Simon? You at least should know me, for I founded this abbey and endowed it with lands and money.'

'Pardon me,' answered the abbot, 'but I know little of those who came before me. Will you tell me your name?'

'Olger the Dane.'

'Strange,' thought the good man to himself, 'he calls me Simon when my name is Geoffrey, and the abbey charter certainly says that the abbot who lived in the days of Olger the Dane was named Simon. 'Sir Knight,' said the abbot aloud, 'do you know that Simon has been buried so many years that his very bones are long since crumbled into dust?'

'What! Simon gone? And Charles the Great, and Carahen and my wife Clarice—where are they all? Not dead—it cannot be!'

'Dead—long dead—two hundred years, my son,' the abbot said. Then a great awe and wonderment fell upon Sir Olger as he thought that his dream of Avalon and Morgan le Fay perchance was true; and he followed the abbot into the church, scarce knowing whither he went, and there told all that had happened to him. And the abbot believed him and gave thanks to Heaven for sending back the redoubtable champion of France and Christendom. Then Olger told him the secret of the torch and begged him to make an iron treasure-house beneath the church, wherein so little air should come that the flame might dwindle to a single spark, and that spark being nursed and husbanded might smoulder slowly through the ages. Now this being done and the torch safely locked up and guarded, the abbot became very curious to take in his own hands the strange ring the knight wore on his finger; and Olger let him draw it off. Instantly his youth departed, and he shrivelled into feebleness, a helpless withered husk of a man, with a skin like wrinkled parchment, and no sign of life save a quivering in his aged jaws. But his ring being restored, the Dane's strength and youth returned, and he leaped upon Papillon and rode off to fight for France.

The enemy was gathered at Chartres, a mighty host, and the flagging and disheartened Franks, broken into disorder, fled everywhere before the Paynim. Suddenly appeared in their midst a knight of mighty stature with a black eagle on his shield and riding on a great horse; a knight whose course about the battle-field was tracked with a long line of slain; and the frightened Franks seeing the marvels which he did, stayed in their flight, saying one to another, with bated breath for wonderment, 'It is Olger the Dane!' till the whisper grew to a cry, and the cry to a great battle-shout that rent the air, 'Olger the Dane! Olger the Dane!' as rushing fearless on the foe they swept the Paynim from the field as a tide sweeps litter from its course. Again and again did Olger lead the Franks to victory, nor rested he from battle till France was free again and Holy Church was stablished, and the spirit of chivalry had revived as in the olden time. While he fought the torch burned fiercely in the church of Saint Faron of Meaux, but when he stayed his hand it dwindled to a spark again.

Covered with glory and renown Sir Olger came at length to court. The King of France was dead, and the queen loved the knight for his bravery and gentleness. One day whilst he slept upon a couch within the banquet chamber of the palace, the queen came to him and one of her dames of honour, named the

Lady of Senlis, withdrew the ring from his finger. They were frightened to see the strong man wither to an ancient dried-up skeleton. But the queen, knowing thereby of a truth that it was Olger the Dane, caused the ring to be immediately replaced and he regained his former youth. Howbeit the Lady of Senlis loved Sir Olger as well as the queen, and finding he cared nothing for her love, she determined at least to hinder him from wedding with her rival. So she sent thirty strong knights to waylay him as he passed out from the palace, charging them to seize Morgan le Fay's ring from his hand. But Sir Olger spurred Papillon among them, and with Courtain his good sword cut them down: neither helm, hauberk, nor shirt of mail, availed against his strong arm.

Now after this the queen would wed with Olger, for she said, 'He and no other shall sit upon the throne of Charles the Great, for he defended it of old and he has saved it now.' And Olger, flushed with the great honour of sitting on the seat of Charles his master, consented. So they made ready for the bridal, and all the lords and ladies of France came to be present at the marriage. Such pomp and ceremony was never seen since the crowning of King Charles. The church shone with the blaze of gold and heraldry, and glittered with the jewels of fair dames and the armour and the banners of brave knights. Stately music echoed through the aisles as a grand procession entered, and the trumpeters and heralds proclaimed the Queen of France and Olger king that shall be crowned. Then Sir Olger took the queen by the hand and led her through the bending throng till they came before the altar, and together kneeled upon the chancel pavement.

Suddenly there shone a light, brighter than all the gold and jewels, and Morgan le Fay, clothed in a shining kirtle so dazzling that none might bear to look thereon, floated down upon a white cloud, and caught away Sir Olger. And the cloud received them both, and wrapping them from mortal sight went up and waned into thin air and vanished in the church, so that whither they went no man can tell.

But Olger the Dane is not dead. For the torch still burns in the treasure house of the Abbey of Saint Faron of Meaux. He only dreams in the arms of Morgan le Fay in the faery land of Avalon, and one day he will waken and come back.

When men fail in the land of the Franks in time of sore distress, when her armies fall upon the field and the spirit of her people is all broken in the battle-fight, when there is none to lead

her children against the stranger and the spoiler of her land, Morgan le Fay will pity her and raise up her old champion, and the Dane shall come back on his mighty battle-horse to trample down the enemy. Then shall the Franks again shout 'Olger the Dane!' and like an angry flood sweep down upon the foe.

The Stories of the Volsungs.

I. THE STORY OF SIGMUND AND SIGNY.

Sigi was the son of All-father Odin. One day he went a hunting in a wood with a thrall named Bredi, and because Bredi slew by far the most and the finest of the deer, Sigi was angry at being outdone by a thrall; wherefore he rose up against Bredi and slew him, and hid his body in a snow-drift. For that cause fled Sigi from his father's land; but Odin bare him company lest any should take vengeance on him, and brought him to the sea, and gave him war-ships. Then Sigi went a warring, and made himself a realm in Hunland and there reigned. Howbeit, in his old age they of his own household turned against him, and made a revolt and slew him.

Then arose Rerir his son, who overcame the rebels and stablished afresh the kingdom of his father. And after many years, when King Rerir had accomplished all his vengeance on his enemies, and gotten together much wealth and great possessions, insomuch that he was envied of all kings, he was greatly troubled because he and his wife being fallen into age had no child to come after them; and it seemed to the king as though he had toiled and warred for naught. Then cried they both without ceasing to the gods to give them a child. And Freyja took pity on them and fetched an apple and gave it into the hands of Ljod her handmaiden, daughter of the giant Hrimnir, to give to the king. So the skymaid put on the dress of a crow, and came flying to where King Rerir sat musing on a mound, and dropped the apple in his lap. Then the king took the apple and gave it to his wife, and she ate thereof.

In due season the time of the queen's travail came and passed by, yet could she in nowise be lightened. And while she still lay sick, it befell that King Rerir went on a journey to the wars, and on his way a weariness overcame him, and he went home to Odin.

Six years the queen lay in her trouble, neither could she by any means be delivered, till finding herself a dying, she bade them

cut the child from out her body. They did as she bade them. She kissed the child at his birth, named him Volsung, and then died. Volsung grew a mighty warrior, stronger and more daring than any of his time. He wedded Ljod, the handmaiden of Freyja, and she bare him, first a son and daughter, Sigmund and Signy, which were twin, and after that nine sons. And all his seed were high-minded and of great hardihood and cunning, in which things the Volsungs far surpassed all other folk before or since.

Now when Volsung's daughter, Signy, was come of age to wed, Siggeir, King of Gothland, came across the sea to ask her for his wife.

Volsung had built a great mead-hall. So big was it that there stood an oak tree named Branstock in the midst, the limbs whereof branched all about the roof, and the roots under-ran all the benches. In this hall Volsung made a feast for Siggeir, and led forth his daughter Signy, and betrothed her to him in presence of his men. But Signy was very loth to the marriage, having no mind towards the King of Gothland; yet in this as in all things she bade her father rule for her.

Now on the day of the wedding feast, at eventide when the men sate by the firelight at either end of the hall, and the great oak was shadowing the midst in gloom, there came amongst them an old man, one-eyed and of great stature. He was clad in a spotted cloak and linen breeches tight as hosen. He wore a slouched hat on his head, and went barefoot; in his hand was a sword. He took no heed of any, but went straightway to the Branstock and smote the sword up to the hilt into the tree-trunk. Then said he, 'Whoso plucketh out this sword from this stock shall have the same as a gift from me, and shall find in good sooth that never bare he better sword in hand than this.' And the old man passed out: neither durst any question him whence he came or whither he went.

Then each man hasted to be first to try and pull out the sword, thinking it a very easy matter. But beginning with the noblest they all made trial, yet not one of them could pluck it forth. Last of all came Sigmund, Volsung's son, and no sooner did he set finger on the pommel than it loosed itself lightly to his hand.

King Siggeir, beholding how goodly a sword it was, prayed Sigmund to sell it for thrice its weight in gold; and when Sigmund would not, he was very angry, for he coveted the weapon, yet made as though he cared little thereabout, for he was a double-dealing man.

There was fair weather on the morrow after Siggeir and Signy were wed, and Siggeir got ready to cross the sea again, neither would he abide as the custom was for the end of the feast. Then came Signy, pleading to her father that the marriage might be undone, for that she had no liking for her husband, and foreknew, besides, that great evil would befall if she went away with him. But Volsung said there was no help for it, inasmuch as they were all pledged to the wedding. King Siggeir made Volsung promise to come over to Gothland with his men in three months' time, and there finish the feast: then he set sail with his bride.

At the time appointed Volsung and his sons went over the sea to Gothland to the feast. But as soon as they were come to land, Signy came and talked with her father and brothers privily, saying: 'Siggeir has made ready a great army to fall upon you, wherefore make all speed back to Hunland, and gather together what warships you may, and come and fight with him. But turn back for this time or you will surely be slain.'

'Daughter,' answered Volsung, 'all people know that long ere I was born I spake a vow that I would flee neither from fire nor sword. Men die but once, and I have fought a hundred fights and never prayed for peace.'

Then Signy besought that they would at least let her die with them, and not send her back to King Siggeir. But Volsung said, 'Thou art his; wherefore go back.' So she went back sorrowing.

Now at daybreak King Siggeir made ready his host and led them forth to hunt down Volsung and his handful of folk. A brave fight the Volsungs made against that host. Eight times they hewed their way through, and turned to cut the mass in twain again, but in that fray King Volsung fell and all his men, saving only his ten sons, and these King Siggeir took and bound with cords. Then he carried the ten brethren away to a lonesome wood, and caused a great beam to be brought and set upon their feet. And each night for nine nights as they sate in the stocks, there came ravening from out the wood an old she-wolf, and bit one of the brethren till he died, then ate his flesh and went her way. But on the tenth night when only Sigmund was left alive, Signy sent a trusty man to anoint his face with honey, and to set some in his mouth. That night when the she-wolf came she sniffed the honey, and began licking his face all over with her tongue; and when she had licked it dry, she thrust her tongue into his mouth for more. Then Sigmund caught her tongue betwixt his teeth and held it fast, and the she-wolf started back and set her feet against the beam and tugged. Sigmund gripped

hard with his teeth, and the she-wolf pulled, until the beam was broken in the fierceness of their tussle, and the beast's tongue came out by the roots. So the she-wolf had her bane. Men say that she was Siggeir's mother who by witchcraft took the wolf-shape.

After this, Sigmund being loosed from the stocks dwelt in the woods, and none save his sister Signy knew of his hiding there. He made him an earth-house underground and dwelt therein, and Signy nourished him with victuals.

Signy had two children by King Siggeir, but as soon as ever the eldest was ten years old she sent him away to her brother in the wood, because she would have him trained up to avenge King Volsung's death. One day Sigmund gave the boy the meal-bag and set him to make ready the bread whilst he went to gather firing. But Sigmund, when he came back with the wood, found no bread ready. The boy sat trembling and afraid to put his hand into the meal-bag, saying that there was something alive therein. Wherefore the next time his sister visited him Sigmund said, 'What shall I do with this feeble-hearted brat?' She answered, 'Kill him; there is none of our blood in him.' Sigmund made no more ado but took and slew him. And when Signy's other son was grown of like age she sent him also to her brother; and for the same cause she bade Sigmund slay him.

One day, as Signy sat in her bower, there came a wise witch-wife to her saying, 'Change likenesses with me.' And Signy being willing, the witch-wife took upon herself the likeness of the queen, and in that shape abode for three days with King Siggeir. Then Signy in the guise of the witch-wife came to Sigmund in his earth-house, saying, 'I have strayed in the wood and lost my way. I pray thee give me food and shelter.' And Sigmund knew her not, but took her in and set meat before her. So for three days and three nights she abode with him in his earth-house. Then she departed and met the witch-wife, and they changed themselves to their proper seeming again.

Afterward Signy bare a child whose name was Sinfjötli. He grew a big and hardy boy; fair of face like the Volsungs. When he was ten years old, Signy sent him to Sigmund. But first she sewed gloves on to his hands through flesh and skin. When she had done the like to the other boys they wept and screamed, but Sinfjötli never winced; nor yet when she flayed off his kirtle, though the skin came off with the sleeves. So soon as the lad was come to the earth-house, Sigmund set him to knead the meal while he went to fetch firing. By the time he got back the bread

was made. Then Sigmund asked if he had found aught i meal. 'Aye,' said the boy, 'there was something quick th I know not what; I kneaded it all into the bread.' Sigr laughed and said, 'Thou hast kneaded the deadliest of vip the meal.' Then Sigmund ate the bread, but would not suffe boy to taste thereof, for Sinfjötli, though he might take no from venom on the outside of him, durst not eat or drink th After that Sigmund took the lad about the woods and tr him to a fierce and hardy life. But he wist not that the boy his son. They gat wolf-skins from before the door of two that were skin-changers, and clad themselves therein, and forth in wolf-shape to slay men for their wealth. Whilst in guise, it was agreed betwixt them that neither should risk onset of more than seven men at once without howling fo fellow. And because one day Sinfjötli in his wolf-dress fo eleven men and slew them all, Sigmund finding him afte battle was angry, and ran upon Sinfjötli and worried him b throat, because he had not called for help. Nevertheless Sigmund saw the wound he had made in the lad's throat h sorry and looked how he might heal him. And as it fell ou saw a weasel bitten in the throat and how his fellow ran to a th and brought a leaf and laid it upon the wound, and the cre was made whole. Then Sigmund got a blade of that same and therewith Sinfjötli's hurt was immediately healed. when the time came for them to put off their wolf-gear, Sigr took and burned their dresses lest more harm should befall be of them.

Now Sinfjötli being come to manhood, Sigmund took co with him as to how they should come upon King Siggeir t him, and accordingly as they agreed, they stole into the por the king's hall in the dusk of evening, and hid themselves bet the tuns of ale. Signy and the king had two young chil and as these played in the porch with a golden toy, a ring off and went trundling away among the barrels. And whe children went seeking it, they saw two fierce, wild men cro down, and away they ran to tell their father. While the sat doubting, and thinking it no more than a youngster's Signy took both the children and brought them out int porch, saying to Sigmund, 'Here are the brats that have bet you. Slay them!' Sigmund answered, 'Nay, for they d without guile.' But Sinfjötli came forth from his hiding drew his sword and slew them both. And he took the b and cast them into the hall at Siggeir's feet.

Then up rose the king and his men, and set on so fiercely and in so great numbers that they took Sigmund and Sinfjötli and bound them. The most of that night the king lay awake devising the worst death he could make these men suffer; and on the morrow he had a big barrow made of turf and stones, and a great flat stone set up endwise for a wall in the midst. He set Sigmund and Sinfjötli one on either side of the stone, so that they might hear each other's speech but in no wise come together. Then he gave the word to cover in the barrow with earth and turf-sods and bury them quick. But as the thralls were working, Signy came and flung an armful of straw into the barrow; and the men kept her counsel.

About nightfall the barrow was closed in. And Sinfjötli began to talk to Sigmund. He said, 'We shall not lack for meat, since the queen hath cast down swine's flesh on my side wrapped in a bundle of straw; and in the flesh thy sword is sticking.' Then Sinfjötli took out the sword and carved at the stone until he wrought a hole therein. And as soon as Sigmund could grip the swordpoint on the other side they set to work and sawed the stone in twain. So being loose in the barrow they cut their way through the earth, and got out into the air some while after midnight. They then went and cut down wood, and set it round about the palace and kindled it. And when the palace was all ablaze Signy came running to the window. Sigmund would have got her out, but she would not.

And Signy said to Sigmund, 'You have done well; but judge if I have forgotten vengeance for King Volsung! Did I begrudge to slay the worthless brats I bare to Siggeir? But I am mother to Sinfjötli! For Siggeir's bane I lodged with thee those three nights in the witch-wife's shape. Be glad; thou art Sinfjötli's father. He is the child of Volsung's son and Volsung's daughter, and by him vengeance has come for Volsung. But I?—*I* come away? and miss to see King Siggeir burn? Nay, brother dear! Merry was I not to wed with Siggeir, but merrily will I die with him.'

Then leaned she from the window and kissed Sigmund her brother, and Sinfjötli, and went blithely back again into the fire and burned with Siggeir and his men.

After this Sigmund and Sinfjötli came back to Hunland, and they put down a man there which had made himself king in Volsung's room; and Sigmund reigned over Hunland and made himself a name far and wide; moreover, he took to wife Borghild, who bare him two sons, Helgi and Hamund.

Now Sinfjötli must needs go to war again for a woman's sake that was very fair. For this cause he fought with the queen's brother, who likewise had set his love upon the same maiden. And Sinfjötli slew him and won his lands and took the damsel to himself. But Queen Borghild was not to be appeased for the slaying of her brother; and for all Sigmund could do it was a long while before she would let Sinfjötli look upon her face. Howsoever, she bade many great men to the funeral feast, and Sinfjötli came among the rest. And when the queen bare the drink to the guests she filled him a horn saying, with a fair courtesy, 'Drink now, good stepson.' But he looked in the horn and would not taste thereof, for he said, 'A charm is therein.' Then Sigmund laughed and rose up from his seat, and took the horn and drained it at a draught. Again the queen came to Sinfjötli, and mocked him, 'Wilt thou get another man to drink thine ale?' He took the horn, and answered, 'There is guile in the drink.' So Sigmund came and tipped it off. The third time came the queen saying, 'What Volsung doth not drink his drink?' He took the horn into his hand, and said, 'There is venom in the cup.' Sigmund, grown drunken with his ale, cried, 'Then strain it out with thy lips, O Son.' So Sinfjötli drank, and fell down dead upon the floor.

Then Sigmund rose up in grievous sorrow. He took the corpse in his arms and bare it away through a wood till he came to a river-mouth. And he was ware of a man in a little boat who asked if he would be ferried across the water; but the boat was so small it would hold but one, so they laid the corpse therein. And immediately corpse and man and boat vanished from Sigmund's sight. So he turned and came home; and he put away his queen, and soon after that she died.

King Eylimi had a fair daughter named Hjordis, and Sigmund went to woo her. Thither also came King Lyngi, Hunding's son, on the same errand. And King Eylimi spake to his daughter, saying: 'Thou art a wise woman, wherefore, choose whether of these two kings thou wilt take.' She answered, 'Although he is well stricken in years, I choose Sigmund, since he is the man of greatest fame.'

So Sigmund was wedded to Hjordis and brought her home to Hunland, and King Eylimi came with them. But King Lyngi gathered together his men and came up against Sigmund to fight with him because he had taken away his bride. Sigmund sent Hjordis away into a wood, together with a certain bondmaid, and with all the treasure, to abide there whilst they fought.

ien he and King Eylimi set up their banners by the sea and ew the trumpets; but their army was by far the fewest. Old King Sigmund was he hewed with his sword ever in the ickest of the battle, and smote down men till his arms were d with blood even to the shoulder. Yet neither host gave ay.

Now when the battle had lasted some while, there came into e fight an old man in a blue cloak, with a slouched hat on his ad. He had but one eye, and in his hand he bare a bill. nd when Sigmund lifted up his sword against him, the old man t his bill in the way, so the blade smote upon the bill-edge nd shivered in two. But the old man was no more to be seen. hen great dismay spread through Sigmund's host, because his ood-hap was departed from him. And though the king cried a his men all he might, they fell fast about him; and by even-de King Sigmund and King Eylimi were fallen in the forefront f the battle, and the war-noise ceased.

At night came Hjordis stealing out of the wood, and went to nd fro among the slain, seeking for Sigmund. There was yet a ittle life in him, and she said, 'Waken, dear lord, thou shalt ot die; but we will heal thee to avenge my father.' He answered, 'It may not be; neither will I suffer myself to be healed ince Odin has broken my sword. But, behold now, thou wilt ear a child, and I know that he shall grow up the most famous f the Volsungs. Him shalt thou nurture to do thy vengeance; nly see thou treasure the shards of my good sword, Gram, for hereof shall a sword be made for him which shall accomplish great onders. But now I am weary with wounds, and I would fain o home to my kindred.' So Hjordis sat by him till the dawning, hen he died.

Now at sunrise came Alf the Viking, son of Hjalprek King of Denmark, sailing along the coast, who, seeing two women alone ith the dead upon a battle-field, leaped ashore with his men nd came to them. Then Hjordis told what had befallen, nd lest the treasure in the wood should fall into King Lyngi's ands she discovered its hiding-place to Alf, and they got the easure out and laded the ships therewith; and Hjordis and her andmaid sailed away to Denmark with the Vikings, and came to ing Hjalprek's palace and there abode.

II. THE STORY OF HELGI, HUNDING'S BANE.

HELGI was Sigmund's son which Borghild bare. Helgi made a name for himself when he went up to battle against Hunding that mighty king, and slew him and took his lands. So was he Hunding's bane. Afterwards came Hunding's four sons with many warriors, and fought to win back their land, but Helgi overcame them and put their men to the rout.

Now as he was returning from this victory Helgi met a company of exceeding fair women, and the queen of them was Sigrun, King Hogni's daughter. So fair was she that Helgi could not take his eyes off from beholding her, and he spake to her, saying, 'Fare home with me and be my queen.' But Sigrum answered, 'Would that I might, for verily my heart goeth out toward thee, but I have a worse fate to accomplish, since my father hath promised me in marriage to Hodbrod, the son of King Granmar; and him I despise. Go, fight him; win me, and I am thine.'

Then Helgi sent out men with money to hire as many ships as they might. They got together many vessels and near a score thousand men, and Helgi made sail for King Granmar's country. They made the land at Wolfstone, and fought their way ashore. Fierce was the battle that befell; and in the midst there came a company of shield-maidens and fought on Helgi's side, chief of whom was Sigrun, the king's daughter. Then Helgi fell on King Hodbrod and slew him beneath his own banner; and seeing this Sigrun cried out, 'Thou hast done well, and now I pledge thee my troth. We will share the land between us.'

So Helgi, when he had overcome King Granmar and his host, became king of that realm and wedded Sigrun. After that Hogni, Sigrun's father, came up against him because he had taken away his daughter; and with him also came Dag his son. But Helgi slew Hogni, and put his men to the worst; and as for Dag, after he had taken an oath from him to make war on him no more, he let him go in peace. But Dag went his way and sacrificed continually to Odin, praying that he might avenge his father. And at last Odin lent Dag his spear, and with that spear in his hand Dag came seeking Helgi his brother-in-law, and finding him in a place called Fetter-grove, thrust him through therewith that he died.

Forth rode Dag to his sister Sigrun, to tell her the tidings.

'Lo,' said he, 'Helgi have I slain, and our father is avenged!' Sigrun answered, 'Now are my good days past; no more shall I find gladness in the pleasant sunshine. Cursed be thou for a foul oath-breaker. May thy ship linger when it should sweep the swiftest! May thy steed lag when thou wouldest fain flee fastest from thine enemies! Thy sword, may it never bite till in wrath it singeth round thine head! But as for Helgi, my love, he was chief among all other men, as the ash-tree that riseth from the thorns, or as the antlered deer is above the forest-game.'

Then she raised a barrow above Helgi and gave him a noble burial. And when Helgi was gone up to Valhalla, Odin made him lord over all things there, and Hunding came and served him, and made ready his fire, and tended his hounds and horses.

In the gloaming of the evening there came one of Sigrun's handmaidens to Helgi's mound, and behold she saw Helgi and a great company of dead warriors riding fast about the mound. Then she ran and told her mistress, and Sigrun hasted and came thither, and finding the mound uncovered, she went in and took Helgi's cold head upon her lap. Thus she made her moan: 'O Helgi, my dead love, I hunger for thee, as the hawks of Odin hunger for their quarry. See, I kiss thy hair all dripping with cold dews; I take thy hands in mine. O let me warm thee back to life against my breast, and bring the light to those dull eyes again!' And the dead man spake to her. He said: 'Now shall all death-sorrow depart from me if thou wilt dwell with me in my mound; if thou, a fair white maiden, wilt abide in the arms of a dead man.' Then Sigrun commanded a bed to be made ready in the mound, and for all her folk told her that the dead were stronger and more hurtful in the night-season than in the daylight, she went in thither and lay by her dead lord. But in the early twilight Helgi rose up, saying, 'Hark, I hear the crowing of Salgofnir, the golden cock upon Valhalla. I must ride my pale horse along the reddening ways to Windhelm's bridge. Farewell; the dead ride fast.' Therewith Helgi departed, and after that came no more to the mound. Sigrun watched and waited night by night, till the hope of his coming waned away. Then because of her sorrow she sickened and died.

Of old it was commonly believed that folk should be born again. And it was said that Helgi the Scathe of Hadding, who lived long after, was none other than Helgi, Hunding's bane; and they say that Kara the Valkyrie, daughter of Halfdan, was Sigrun.

III. THE STORY OF SIGURD AND BRYNHILD.

Now soon after Hjordis was come to Hjalprek's palace in Denmark, she bare dead Sigmund's son. They called his name Sigurd, and as he grew up there was no child but loved him. Truly he waxed a man of great might and prowess, and for his high mind and his stout heart he has ever been held above all the men of the north. Regin was his foster-father, and taught him the runes, and to speak with strange tongues, and play at chess, as was the wont of king's sons. So the boy grew up, and his mother in due time wedded with Alf, King Hjalprek's son.

One day Regin asked Sigurd if he knew how much of his father's treasure the king had, and whether he could trust the king therewith. Sigurd answered, 'Trust him? Aye; why not? I can get it when I want it.' Another time came Regin, saying, 'I marvel truly to see thee run about afoot like a knave. Why doth not the king give thee a horse to ride?' Sigurd said, 'I need but ask and have.' Therewith he went to King Hjalprek and asked for a horse; and immediately the king bade him go take one for himself, together with whatsoever thing else he desired; for the king loved him as though he were his own son. Wherefore on the next day Sigurd went alone into the wood, and meeting there an old, long-bearded man, he said, 'I am come to choose a horse; give me counsel thereon.' Then the old man drave the horses down into the deeps of the river Busiltarn; and it fell out that they all swam back to land save a young grey horse whose back no man had crossed. 'Take him,' said the grey-beard, 'he is of Sleipnir's breed;' and saying this the old man vanished away. That old man was Odin; he gave Sigurd the foal Grani, which was the best horse in the world.

Regin came again to Sigurd, saying, 'I can tell thee where there is much wealth for the winning and great fame to be got thereby. On the Glistening Heath dwells the dragon Fafnir; he has more treasure than any king ever yet heaped together.' Sigurd said, 'I have heard of this evil worm and how he is so terrible none durst go against him.' Regin answered, 'Nay; men make a great tale about him, but he is no worse than other lingworms. Thy fathers, the old Volsungs, would have recked little of him.' Sigurd said, 'I am scarce out of my childish years, and have not yet the hardihood of my sires; but why art thou so eager to drive me to this encounter?'

Then Regin told him about Fafnir, saying, 'I had two brothers, afnir and Otter. Otter was a great fisher, and by day he put : the shape of an otter, the better to take the fish, but he always ought them home to Hreidmar our father, begrudging nothing. s for Fafnir, he was greedy and grasping, and wanted every- ing for his own. In the swirl where Otter went fishing abode dwarf called Andvari, in the likeness of a pike, for which reason e swirl was named Andvari's force. One day Otter caught a almon in the force and brought it to land, and when he had ten it he lay slumbering on the bank. It befell that Loki assed that way with Odin and Hahnir; and Loki, seeing Otter sleep, flung a stone and killed him. Then they flayed off the tter's skin and brought it to Hreidmar's house, and showed him hat they had done. But when Hreidmar saw that they had ain his son he was wroth, and immediately laid hands on them, either would he let them go till they promised to fill the otter- kin with gold, and cover it without with gold. Then went Loki Ran, and having borrowed her net, cast it into Andvari's force nd took the pike; and he made Andvari bring out his gold and ll the otter-skin and cover it without. Andvari gave up all his old save only one ring, for he said that whoso had that gold- ng should find it his bane. But when the gods brought the tter-skin to Hreidmar he looked at it and spied one of the uzzle-hairs uncovered; and he would have Andvari's last ring cover that hair withal. Then Loki rejoiced, saying to Hreid- ar, "That ring shall be the bane of thee and thy son!" And it fell out. For Fafnir murdered his father to get the gold, nd after that became more grudging than ever. So he grovelled ll he grew a worm, the worst of worms, and fell to brooding on is treasure. But I went to King Hjalprek and became his aster-smith.' Then Sigurd said, 'If thou wouldst have me slay is dragon, make me now by thy craft a trusty sword.'

Straightway went Regin to his forge and made a sword. When was done Sigurd took the sword in his hands and smote it on e anvil to prove it, but the blade brake and he cast it away, idding Regin forge a better. So Regin blew up his fire and ade another sword. But Sigurd looked thereon and said, 'A lague on thy smithying, Regin! Art thou a traitor like all thy in?' And he took that brand and brake it likewise across the nvil.

Then went Sigurd to his mother Hjordis and asked for the ards of his father's sword Gram. And when he had gotten em he came to Regin in the smithy and bade him weld them

together. Regin, grown surly by this time, flung the pieces in the fire and took a welding-heat on them. When the sword was joined, and he bare it from the forge, it seemed to the smith that fire burned along its edges. Then Sigurd took and smote the sword into the anvil, and clave the anvil down to the stock; but the edge of the blade was not turned. He took a lock of wool and flung it in the river against the stream, and cut it clean in two with the sword. And he said, 'It is a good blade.' And Regin said, 'Now I have made a brand for thee thou wilt keep thy troth and go and fight with Fafnir.' But Sigurd answered, 'All in good time, but first I must avenge my father.'

Sigurd went away to Gripir the seer, who knew things to come, and what should happen to men; and he besought Gripir to foreshow him his life. Then spake the seer: 'Thou wilt get riches from a dragon, but thou wilt squander them. Thou shalt win fame from many kings, and there shall come after thee no greater man than thou. Thou shalt learn wisdom from a woman and yet not be wise against women. Thou shalt forget her thou lovest best and woo her for another, and a woman shall be thy bane.' But Sigurd was angry with the seer, and said, 'How could I forget her I loved best?' And he came away.

A little after Regin met him and said, 'Why tarry longer? Go and slay Fafnir.' But he answered, 'I have other work to do.'

Then came Sigurd to King Hjalprek and asked him for men and ships and war-gear wherewith to go and avenge his father on the Hundings. And the king having furnished him with all he desired, Sigurd steered the noblest of the dragon-keels, and led the way across the green sea-plain. For some days they sailed with fair wind and weather; then the colour faded from the sea, the wan sky gathered thick with piling clouds, the wave-mounds rose, the storm-wind beat their crests to foam and flung the spume-flakes wide. Like breaking hills the waters tumbled in upon the deck; yet, for all the storm was so fierce, Sigurd would take in no sail, but rather bade his men crowd on the more. No Volsung ever furled sail for any wind that blew. In the midst of the storm a certain man hailed them from a cliff top, and Sigurd steered that way and took him aboard. When they asked his name he said, 'Once when I gladdened Odin's ravens in the battle, men called me Hnikar. Call me that, or Feng or Fjolnir, as you will.' Then Sigurd, being ware that Hnikar knew the fates and what was to come, asked him concerning the things which betoken good and evil to a warrior.

ikar said, 'It bodeth good for him that goeth to war if he see
lark-winged raven, or two young warriors in a porchway, or if
hear a wolf howl from beneath an ash-tree. To trip the foot
ien clad for battle is a sorry token, for it showeth that the
sir are on either side of thee, and greedy for thy wounding.
ie warrior should go forth in the morning well combed, well
ished, well fed, so he may endure the toils of the day; but at
ening let him fight with his back to the setting sun, that the
es of his enemy may be dazzled, while his own may see the
tter.'

Soon afterwards the storm abated, and Hnikar vanished away.
nd when the vessels were come to Hunland where King Lyngi
e Hunding reigned, Sigurd got his men ashore and laid waste
.e country with fire and sword, and drave the folk inland, so
at they fled to their king and told him how the Volsungs were
llaging the shores. Then King Lyngi sent messages throughout
is realm and gat together a great army and came out, he and
is brothers, to withstand Sigurd; and an exceeding fierce fight
iere was. Sigurd went about the battle with his good sword
ram and smote down men and horses till one could not see his
nail for blood, and his foes shrank aback before him. He it was
who smote Lyngi down, through helm and chine, and slew all
ne other sons of Hunding; then his men fell on the discomfited
ost and put the most part of them to death. So Sigurd won
ack his father's land, and after abiding there for a short space,
e came again to Denmark.

He had been but a little while at home when Regin came and
minded him of his promise to go and fight Fafnir. So Sigurd
ut him ready and rode with Regin to the heath where Fafnir
vas wont to go to his watering. They saw the mighty track he
nade, and how it led to a cliff whereon the drake would lie and
ang his head over to lap the water thirty fathoms below. 'Thou
ast beguiled me, Regin,' said Sigurd, 'in that thou didst say
his drake was no bigger than other ling-worms, whereas I see
y the track of him that he is very great.' But Regin counselled
im to make a pit in the drake's pathway and sit therein, so that
hen the worm came to his watering he might smite him to the
eart. Then said Sigurd, 'Aye, but the blood of so huge a
reature will flood the heath, and fill the pit, and drown me
herein.' Regin answered, 'What profiteth it to give thee coun-
el? Thou hast not the courage of thy kindred.' Howbeit,
hen Sigurd rode away over the heath to seek the dragon, Regin
neaked off and hid himself to save his skin.

Now when Sigurd was at work digging the pit, he was ware of the same old man with the long beard who gave him his horse. The grey-beard bade him dig many pits wherein the blood might run, and then vanished away. So Sigurd made pits all about the heath and hid himself in one of them. Presently the great worm came creeping along his track, snorting venom as he went, and shaking the earth with his roaring. Sigurd had no fear, but from the pit thrust up his sword and smote the drake beneath the left shoulder to the heart.

Then Fafnir, when he knew he had gotten his death-thrust, lashed out right and left in his madness, and brake to pieces all the trees about him. And he spake to Sigurd, saying, 'Who drove thee to this deed? And who art thou that fearest not my terribleness like other folk?' Sigurd said, 'My heart, my hand, my sword, these urged me to thy slaying. I am Sigmund the Volsung's son, and "an old sire maketh a hardy boy."' Then said Fafnir, 'Rejoice not to win the gold; there is a curse on it, and it shall prove thy bane as it has been mine.' 'Fret not thyself to lose it then,' answered Sigurd, 'for naught it availeth for a man to cling to his gold when his life-day is done; but as for me I will hold it till that day of days.'

Now as soon as Fafnir was dead, Regin crawled out from his hiding-place and began to make great ado, saying, 'Alas! thou hast slain mine own brother, and verily I am not wholly guiltless in this matter.' Sigurd mocked him for hiding in the heather-bush, and bade him take comfort, for that he was guiltless of aught save cowardice. Regin said, 'Boast not thyself, for had it not been for the sharp sword I made thee thou couldst not have prevailed against him.' Sigurd laughed, 'Better in fight is a stout heart than a sharp sword.' Then Regin fell to lamenting again, saying, 'My brother is dead, and, good sooth, but it was I that slew him.' Nevertheless, for all his heaviness, Regin went to the body of the worm and began to drink of Fafnir's blood; and he spake to Sigurd, saying, 'I pray thee cut the heart from out him, bear it to the fire and roast it, and give me to eat.'

Then Sigurd took the drake's heart and set it on a spit and made a fire and roasted it. But as it sputtered in the fire he laid his finger thereon to try if it were done, and set his finger in his mouth. And so soon as Sigurd tasted of the worm's heart-blood, he understood the voice of all fowls, and knew what the wood birds chattered in the bushes. One said, 'Sigurd, give not the meat to another, but eat it thyself—so shalt thou become the wisest of men.' Another spake, 'Regin doth but beguile thee

that he may get the treasure,' 'If I were Sigurd,' said a third, 'I would smite off his head, and save all disputing about the gold.' 'Well magged, gossip,' cried another bird, 'for "where wolf's ears are be sure their teeth are not far off;" and when he has done so, let him ride to Hindfell. There sleeps fair Brynhild, and from her he shall gain great wisdom.'

Sigurd thought within himself, 'Regin shall never be my bane; so let both brothers travel by one road'—and with that he drew his sword Gram and smote off Regin's head by the shoulders. Then straightway the birds broke out a-singing, and in their songs they told of Brynhild, the maiden that lay sleeping in a flaming hall of gold upon the mountain Hindfell; told how Odin struck the sleep-thorn into her because, being a Valkyrie, she had chosen for death in battle one he willed not to be slain; told how only Sigurd might wake her from the torment of her sleep.

Then Sigurd ate of Fafnir's heart and put by the rest; and after that he went and sought out Fafnir's dwelling-place, which was dug deep into the earth, and got the treasure out. There was more gold than two dray horses could carry, besides the Helm of Awe and the gold Byrnie, and many other precious things. He set the gold in two big chests and laded them upon his horse Grani, whom he would fain have led by the bridle, because the burden was so great; yet would not that good steed stir till his master leaped upon his back. Then, swift as the wind, he sped away for Hindfell which lies by the land of the Franks.

Now when Sigurd came to the mountain, he saw as it were a flame of fire and a great light go up from Hindfell. And when he reached the top, behold, a shield-hung castle shining with the glory of the gold; above, upon the topmost tower, a banner; but all about was desolate and still. Then went he in. There was silence, save his footfall sounding in the hall. But as he wandered hither and thither he came upon a fair maiden fast asleep and lying in her armour. At first he wist it had been a man, till he took her helmet off and saw the golden locks stream all about her head. So fast was the byrnie set upon her that it seemed to have grown to her flesh; and because of this byrnie in which she went to the wars, the maiden was called Brynhild; but Sigurd cut it with his sword as it had been no more than cloth, and rent it from the collar and tare the sleeves away.

Then Brynhild opened her eyes and said, 'Who has prevailed to rend my byrnie and to deliver me from my long sleep?'

He answered, 'I, Sigurd the Volsung, slayer of Fafnir; I that

bear Fafnir's helm upon my head, and Fafnir's bane in my hand I rent the byrnie.'

Brynhild said, 'Long and wearily have I slumbered! Ho sweet it is to see the day again, and the bright sky, and th plentiful green earth! It was when Helm Gunnar fought wit Agnar, and Odin promised him the victory, that I rebelled agains All-Father and chose for death Helm Gunnar in his stead; s Odin pierced me with the sleep-thorn, and doomed me when woke to love but to possess not; to wed, but not to have m will. Yet vowed I a vow that I would only love a man whic knew not fear.'

Then Sigurd besought her to teach him wisdom. Brynhil fetched a beaker and made a love-drink and bare to him; an while he drank she showed him the hidden lore of the runes tha are the root of all things. She taught him runes of war, of love of feasting, and of healing; showed him words and signs tha have power over herbs, and cattle, and men—yea, that compe the Æsir up in Asgard; showed him how and where to carv them, on gold and glass, on mead-horn, on the sword-hilt, on th rudder of the ship, on bough and flower-bud, on chariot-wheel upon the eagle's bill, and on the witch-wife's seat.

As Sigurd listened, his eyes beheld her beauty whilst she spake and he said, 'Surely no wiser nor sweeter woman than thou ar may be found in the wide world; therefore will I have thee fo mine own, because thou art grown so dear to me.' She answered 'Though I had all the sons of men to choose from, thee would take beyond them all.' And so they plighted their troth.

Then Sigurd rode away. His golden shield was wrought wit many folds; pictured thereon was the image of the drake, i brown and red. Gold-wrought were his weapons, gold th housings of his horse, and on them all was blazoned the imag of the drake, that men might know the slayer of the great worm Fafnir. His hair was golden-red and fell about his face in locks his beard of the same hue, thick and short: high-nosed he was high-boned and broad his face; so bright were his eyes that few durst gaze up into them. He was wide as two men betwixt th shoulders; and as for his height, when he girt on his sword Gram which was seven spans long, and passed through standing corn, the sheath-point smote the ears as he went. Persuasiv was he of speech, and so wise withal that none could gainsay hi words; gentle to his friends, terrible to his enemies; and no ma ever shamed him or put him in fear.

Sigurd journeyed till he came to Hlymdale to the dwelling of

great chief named Heimir, who had wedded Bekkhild, a sister of Brynhild. And since Heimir besought him to tarry awhile, he turned in thither and there abode; and daily went out with Alswid, Heimir's son, for sport with hawk and hound.

Soon after, came Brynhild also to the castle to see her sister; but Sigurd knew not of her coming, neither saw her; for she came unseen and went up and dwelt in a chamber in a high tower. There she sate day by day embroidering upon a cloth with golden thread the slaying of the dragon Fafnir and his brother Regin, and the winning of the treasure. But one time when Sigurd came from hunting, his hawk flew up to a high window in that tower; and climbing after it, Sigurd looked in at the window and saw a maiden, and how she wrought his deeds in gold with wondrous skill and long patience. When he knew that it was Brynhild, he took no more joy in hunting, but left his steed idle in the stall, and his hawks to pine upon their blocks.

Then Alswid asked, what ailed him that he would no longer join their games. He answered, 'I have seen Brynhild, the fairest woman, and in her needlework she works the story of my life; deeds past and deeds to come.' Alswid said, 'It is vain to think of her; for Brynhild has never let a man sit beside her, nor given him drink; she is a war-maid and driveth men to battle to win fame; but none may love her.' 'Nevertheless,' said Sigurd, 'I would make trial and know for certain.' So on the next day he came to Brynhild in her bower and greeted her. She said, 'Glad am I since thou art here, but who shall say if gladness may endure to life's end?' Then he sate down beside her on the bench; and she forbad him not. There came four damsels bearing mead in golden beakers. Brynhild arose and poured the wine and bare to Sigurd, and gave him to drink. He took the beaker; then took the arms that bare it, and drew them about his neck, and kissed her; she forbad him not. And he said, 'Thou art the fairest maid in all the earth, and I am wholly thine.' But Brynhild said, 'Is it wise to plight all thy faith to a woman? Thou mayest change and break thy pledge.' He answered, 'If my tongue pledged thee not, my heart is fixed for now and ever. I can never change, however long the day till we are wed.' Brynhild, foreknowing what should come to pass, looked up in pain and said, 'Beloved, that day will never come; for it is fated that we may not abide together.' Then waxed Sigurd exceedingly sorrowful and said, 'What fruit shall there be of all our life-days if we are sundered? Harder would

it be to bear than the sharp sword-stroke.' She answered sadly, 'Thinkest thou that I have naught to bear? When as a war-maid I set my helm upon my head, and go forth to battle to help the kings, will it be to me a light thing to know that thou art wed to Giuki's daughter—thou whom I love so dear?' Then Sigurd cried, 'God forbid that I should do this thing. Am I a double-hearted man that any maiden should beguile me away from thee? Thee and no other woman I swear to have for mine own, and naught shall ever sunder us.' So with many like words did Sigurd comfort her, and he gave her moreover for a pledge a gold ring. It was Andvari's ring, the last ring of his hoard, which he had cursed. And after they had plighted their troth anew he went his way and joyously hunted with Alswid and his men.

South of the Rhine dwelt king Giuki and his queen Grimhild. There they ruled a wide realm, and had three sons, Gunnar, Hogni, and Guttorm, all men of great valour and renown, and an only daughter named Gudrun, who was bright and fair as the summer sunshine. But one night Gudrun dreamed an ill dream, and her joy departed from her, neither would she take pleasure in anything till she should learn what the dream might signify. And when there was no one found within her palace that could read the meaning of the dream, her maidens counselled her to seek out Brynhild because of her great wisdom, and because she knew the runes which are the root of all things. So Gudrun arrayed herself and her maidens in apparel of great price, and took her journey and came seeking Brynhild.

Brynhild sate in her hall, well knowing who was come seeking her, and she sent to meet Gudrun and her women, and brought them to the castle, and served them there with meat and drink in silver vessels, and gave them good greeting. Then perceiving Gudrun to be somewhat shy of speech, Brynhild began to talk of the great men of the time and their deeds. And when she had spoken of Haki and Hagbard and Sigar and many more, Gudrun said gently, 'Why hast thou not named my brethren, for in truth they are held to be first among mighty men?' Impatient of her words Brynhild answered, 'Of what use to talk of them, or even of those whereof I spake? Hast thou not heard of Sigurd the Volsung? He is king of them all, and more renowned than any man.' Then with fondness in her eyes she told of Sigurd's birth and nourishing, and dwelt with pride upon his deeds. Gudrun said, 'Perchance thou lovest him, and so dost deem him peerless. But I am saddened with a dream, and

have no mind to speak of other things. Wilt thou tell me truly what it betokeneth?' 'I will keep back nothing,' answered Brynhild.

'I thought in my dream,' said Gudrun, 'that as I wandered in a wood with many other maidens, we saw a hart with golden hair, that for its beauty and greatness far excelled the other deer of the forest. We all sought to take him, deeming him more to be desired than all other things. How it befell I know not, but I got him. Then I took and nurtured him, and he grew so dear to me tongue cannot tell, when suddenly there came a fierce woman—'

Brynhild's face grew dark and angry.

Gudrun looked into her eyes and cried, 'O Brynhild, *it was thou! Thou* camest as I fondled him—'

Brynhild cried fiercely—'Yea. *I* came and shot the deer upon thy knees, gave thee a wolf-cub in his stead, and sprinkled thee with thy brothers' blood. Was that thy dream?'

Gudrun bowed her head and hid her face.

'Then hear the reading of it. Thou wilt take Sigurd from me, but thou shalt not have him long. A mighty strife will come by cause of thee and me, and blood will flow. But woe is me! For I may never win my well-beloved. Away! lest I seek to tempt the Fates again!'

Then Gudrun and her maidens rose up quickly and journeyed home; but Brynhild sat and mused upon her punishment ordained of Odin.

Now Sigurd bade farewell to King Heimir and took his way with his war-gear and treasure and came riding till he reached the hall of King Giuki, who seeing his comeliness, and how he shone in golden array, at first deemed him come down from the gods, but when he learned his name and knew him for the slayer of Fafnir, bade him welcome to abide with them. So Sigurd remained with King Giuki and his sons, and proved himself foremost in all their war-games.

But Giuki's wife, Grimhild, when she saw how goodly a man Sigurd was, and heard him speak continually of Brynhild and his love for her, began to cast about how she might lead him to wed with her daughter Gudrun. For she saw that even her sons held him for a man of far greater prowess than they. So one night when they sate drinking in the mead-hall, the queen arose and bare a subtile drink to Sigurd. Sigurd took the horn, but no sooner had he drank thereof than the remembrance of Brynhild and all his love for her straightway departed from him.

And the queen said, 'Why journey further? Abide with us: Giuki will be thy father, I thy mother; Gunnar and Hogni shall be thy brethren. Tarry here, and we will make a kingdom stronger than any upon earth.'

Sigurd liked her speech, for his memory was stolen away by the enchantment of that drink. So he abode with them, and strengthened the realm; and Giuki and his sons prospered exceedingly and made themselves greatly to be feared of all kings round about, because of Sigurd's abiding there.

Then it befell that as Gudrun poured the mead one night and gave him drink, Sigurd took note how fair she was and full of courtesy. And ever thenceforward his eyes would follow her about and rest upon her face. Giuki was very glad thereof, and came to Sigurd saying, 'Seldom will a king offer his daughter to any man, but rather will wait to be entreated; yet because of thy might and worthiness Gudrun shall be thine; yea, though none other man should get her for all his prayers. Take her to wife and make alliance with us, and go no more away.'

And the thing seemed good to Sigurd, because the maiden was very fair in his eyes; and he answered, 'Great is the honour which thou payest me. Let it be as thou hast said.'

So they made the marriage feast, and Sigurd was wed to Gudrun. He gave his new-made wife to eat of the remnant of Fafnir's heart; so she grew wise and great-hearted.

After that Sigurd fared abroad with Gudrun's brothers, and they won lands and wealth and renown, and became great kings.

When they were returned from their journeyings, Grimhild called Gunnar her son, and said, 'Gold and land hast thou in plenty; yet one thing thou lackest, my son, in that thou art unwed. Go now and woo Brynhild, for of all women there is none more meet for a king's bride.'

So Gunnar spake to his brethren and to Sigurd, and they all rode with him over hill and dale till they came to King Budli's house, and asked his daughter of him. But Budli answered, 'I cannot say you yea nor nay, since Brynhild is so high-minded; she will wed whom she will. Go, and may your wooing prosper.' Then came they to Heimir in Hlymdale. He told how Brynhild abode upon the mountain Hindfell, in a castle girt about with fire and how she swore to wed that man alone who should ride through and come to her.

So they took their journey and rode up the steep sides of Hindfell, when lo they saw a castle with a golden roof-tree, hedged all about with roaring flames.

Straightway Gunnar put his horse to face the fire, and smote the spurs into his flanks: but the horse stood shuddering, and backed and reared, but would not go forward. 'Lend me thy horse Grani,' said Gunnar to Sigurd, 'for mine will not tread this fire.' With right good will Sigurd got him down from off his horse, and Gunnar mounted him. Grani galloped to the fire, but there stood still: neither for all Gunnar could do would he go into the flame.

Then Sigurd said, 'I will compass the matter for thee;' so he and Gunnar changed likenesses. And Sigurd taking upon himself the shape and seeming of Gunnar, mounted Grani. Now when he had his master on his back, and felt his golden spurs, Grani leaped blithely into the fire. Fiercer the flames uprose and licked the sky; red rolled the clouds; the earth shook with the roaring of the fire. Yet Sigurd rode on, and with his good sword Gram he cut the flames to right and left, and laid them low. So the fire slaked and he rode on and through, and reached the palace, where sate Brynhild in her byrnie, proud as swan on wave, her helmet on her head, her sword in hand. He lighted off his horse and came into the hall.

She asked him, 'Who art thou? What wouldest thou in my hall?'

Sigurd answered, 'I am Gunnar, son of King Giuki. For thee I have ridden through the fire, and now I claim thee for my wife.'

Heavily she spake: 'I have little mind to wed. O, Gunnar, save thou be the best and chiefest among men I pray thee go thy way. For I have been in battle with the kings; red is my sword with the blood of warriors; and still I hanker after war.'

He said, 'I, Gunnar, have ridden through the fire for thee; and by thine oath, for weal or woe, do I constrain thee.'

Then because of her oath Brynhild rose from her seat and greeted him as her lord, and served him at the table. Three nights lay Sigurd beside her in her bed; but betwixt them he set his naked sword-blade. And when she would know why the sword lay there, he told her that so it was fated he should wed his wife.

And after three days when Sigurd would depart, Brynhild drew from her finger the ring which he had given her before—the ring which Andvari had cursed—and set it for a pledge upon his hand. He gave her another ring from Fafnir's treasure; then rode back through the fire and came to Gunnar. The men changed semblances again and journeyed homeward.

Then came Brynhild to Heimir her brother-in-law, saying, 'Behold, a king named Gunnar rode through my fire. Truly I weened no man save Sigurd, my beloved, should have dared those flames. But Gunnar trode the fire and I am his.' He answered, 'Who can ever tell what shall be? Who can alter that which is?'

Afterward King Giuki and Grimhild his queen held a great feast, and made a wedding for their son. King Budli came; with him his daughter Brynhild, and Atli her brother; Sigurd and Gudrun were there. Great was the joy at the feast, and great was the rejoicing throughout the realm, because Gunnar was married to the fair Brynhild. They twain sate together at the table in the mead-hall, and pledged each other in the wine-cup.

But Sigurd went away apart and groaned in spirit; for at that feast his memory came back. He thought upon his broken oaths; knew what he had won and lost, and gloom fell on him.

One day the two queens went bathing in the river together; and seeing Brynhild go much further out into the water than she dared venture, Gudrun asked wherefore she did this. Brynhild answered, 'Why should not I surpass thee in all things? Thy husband is but King Hjalprek's thrall. Mine is the foremost among men. Gunnar rode through the fire for me.'

Then Gudrun's anger was kindled against Brynhild because she reviled her husband; and she answered, 'Were it not better to hold thy peace as I have done? Why revilest thou my lord? Who but the slayer of Fafnir rode through thy fire and lay beside thee? Who but Sigurd the first of men? See on my hand the ring thou gavest him, Andvari's ring!'

Very pale waxed Brynhild. She knew the ring; and answered not, but clad herself and went her way.

Next day came Gudrun to Brynhild in her bower, saying, 'Why grievest thou? Hast thou not wedded him whom thou didst choose? My brother Gunnar is a mighty man. Sure there is none nobler in thine eyes, none dearer to thine heart,—not even Hjalprek's thrall?'

Then said Brynhild: 'Cruel and hard of heart art thou. Why wilt thou triumph over me? Thou hast taken my love, the noblest man upon the earth. I loved him because of his glory and his might. I love him yet, him only. What is Gunnar beside Sigurd? Be satisfied; thou hast him. Love him, for thy time is short. Aye; take him fast within thine arms. But hold thy peace. Tempt me not on to break with Fate and snatch him from thee ere the hour be come. Yet how can I bear to

know thou hast him even for a little moment! Thou with thy littleness of heart and poverty of love! He with his mighty soul and peerless manliness! So cold a thing as thou couldst not have won the man that knew my burning love, save thou hadst drugged his mind to sleep and robbed his memory of my very name.'

Then went Brynhild up into her chamber, and fell down upon her bed. Wan as a dead woman she grew. She spake no word, because of the bitterness of the thoughts within her. Presently came Gunnar seeking what ailed her, and after he had urged her long, she cried, 'Go from me! I am not thine. Thou didst not dare the fire. With guile hast thou gotten me; with guile thy mother stole my troth-plight's love from me. No king, no champion thou art, but a common man who in the danger-time turns pale and quakes for fear. I swore to wed the noblest man alive: I loathe thee since thou art not he. Privily hast thou beguiled me, but openly and not without warning will I reward thee. Guard thyself quickly, for now is thy death-day come!'

Then leapt she from the bed and drew her sword, and fell upon King Gunnar, and straightway would have taken his life, but Hogni, his brother, came running in; and betwixt them they got her down and bound her fast.

Nevertheless in a little while it repented Gunnar that he had bound her, and he came and set her free. Yet would not Brynhild any the more be appeased. She said, 'Never again in bower or hall shall I make merry or be glad. No words of kindness shall I ever speak or hear. No more my fingers shall do woman's work.' Then went she to her needlework wherein were wrought in gold and divers colours Sigurd's deeds, and rent it in pieces; and she passed up into her bower and set open the doors so that the noise of her wailing was heard afar; and ever she made her moan, 'Give me Sigurd, or I die.' So she cried out in her bitter sorrow till, grief-wearied, she fell asleep.

Seven days she slept, and none could waken her. Her bower-maidens feared greatly, and said one to another, 'The wrath of the gods has fallen on her.'

When Gudrun heard it she repented of her ill words, and had great pity of heart for Brynhild. And Gudrun went with Gunnar to seek to waken her, but in vain; and after that she came with Hogni, yet could they not get speech of her. Then Gudrun besought Sigurd to go, for she said, 'Peradventure thou wilt waken her; but O, my lord, be tender to her, for her grief is very sore and hard to bear.' So Sigurd went up into her

chamber and lifted up his voice and cried, 'Awake Brynhild! For the night is past and the sun shineth all about thee. Brynhild heard his voice and opened her eyes.

'Why art thou come?' she said. 'Too late hast thou remembered me; for now thou art become the cause of all my pain.'

Sigurd answered, 'Never had I aught but tenderness in my heart for thee; but who can alter fate? What is, must needs be borne. Thou hast a noble husband; love him and be happy.'

'How canst thou counsel me so?' she said. 'Is the past all past? And hast thou clean forgot thy troth-plight; and how thou didst ride through the fire and win me for thine own? My eyes have long been veiled; and yet, methought that thou, not Gunnar, didst tread the flames and come into my hall. And now that I know it, I hate him bitterly.'

Then Sigurd said, 'I marvel that thou lovest not Gunnar, for he is a brave man; more to be desired is his love than much red gold. Wherefore turn thine heart toward him and forget all else.'

She said, 'O Sigurd, thou dost root all gentleness from out my breast. How canst thou teach me to love aught but thee? Rather would I see my sword red with thy blood than hear this counsel from thy lips. For now am I become loathsome in thy sight; and thou knowest neither the heart that is in me, nor how fierce the love I bear thee.'

'Brynhild,' he said, 'I loved thee better than my life; and when I found too late that I was beguiled, sore was my pain. But I have sought to live it down, and to put my trouble from me as a king should do. I pity thee, for I have borne a heavy heart full long.'

'Thy grief and pity come too late,' she cried; 'thou art not mine but Gudrun's; thou lovest her; wherefore my life is become hateful to me, and I will not live.'

He answered, 'It is true. Gudrun has grown dear to me; I love her. Yet, rather than thou shouldest die I will put her away, and wed with thee.' Thereat his heart so heaved within his breast that the rings of his mail-coat burst asunder.

She cried, 'I will not have thee. Thou lovest her. Go to her! Leave me to myself.'

With a heavy heart rose Sigurd and went his way. But Brynhild fell weeping afresh; and when her tears were done very dreadful grew her mind. Gunnar came to her, and she said, 'Sigurd has talked with me, and I have showed him all

my heart. Little he careth for my pain since Gudrun has won his love away. He pities me, and bids me give my love to thee. Now he has gone to Gudrun, to tell my grief for her to mock at me. It is too hard to bear. She shall not have him! Either he, or I, or thou shalt die.'

Then spake Gunnar, 'How can I assuage thy sorrow? For with all thy frowardness to me I love thee; yet for that same cause is my life grown burdensome.'

And Brynhild answered: 'I cannot bear that she should have my Sigurd and mock my woe. Gunnar, I loathe thee; yet if thou wouldst slay him in her arms, I feel almost that I could love thee. I should be merry at her grief. Go, slay him; else thou shalt lose thy kingdom and thy wealth, thy life and me; for of a truth I will not rest till I have shed thy blood. For myself, I care not; I shall go away and sleep alone among my kin.'

Then was King Gunnar sore troubled. He thought, 'Rather would I lay down my life than lose Brynhild, whose love is dearer to me than all else. Yet how can I break sworn oaths and promises given?' So he came to his brother Hogni, and said, 'Much it grieveth me, but Sigurd must needs be slain; go thou and do it, for he is false and hath betrayed me to Brynhild.' Hogni said, 'Nay, for we have pledged him our faith, and the sworn oath may not be broken.' Howbeit they took counsel together, and determined to stir up their younger brother Guttorm to the deed, since he was clean of any oath to Sigurd. Then they fetched Guttorm and promised him power and dominion if he would do this thing; and they took and seethed him a pottage of wolf-meat and of strange worms and fish, and gave him to eat; so he grew fierce and thirsted after blood.

In the morning came Guttorm stealthily to the door of the chamber where Sigurd was, and peeped in. Gudrun lay sleeping on his bosom; her white arms clasped about his neck. Twice Guttorm stole in at the door, and twice shrank back; for he thought he saw the glitter of his eyes. The third time he ran in, sword in hand, and thrust Sigurd through therewith, so that the sword smote fast into the bed and pinned him there. Guttorm turned to flee, but never reached the door; for Sigurd caught his sword Gram by the hilt and flung it after him, and cut him clean asunder at the waist; so he fell dead in the doorway, head and shoulders one way, and legs and groin the other. When Gudrun awoke from her soft sleep, and felt the blood all streaming about, and saw her lord death-smitten, she wept and

bewailed so piteously that Sigurd as he lay a-dying lifted his head and kissed her. 'Weep not,' he said; 'death cometh to us all; this was foretold to me, but when it drew near it was hidden from mine eyes lest I should fight with Fate. Brynhild has wrought my death because she loved me before all men; yet little have I deserved this treachery from thy brethren.' Sigurd closed his eyes; fast ebbed the life-tide through his wound. He drew a weary breath, and yielded up the ghost.

Then Gudrun in her sharp sorrow gave a very bitter cry. Brynhild heard it in her bower, and loud laughed she. Gunnar shuddered as he heard her laugh. But Brynhild, still laughing fiercely, went out and caught up Gudrun's child and slew it.

Now it came to pass when Gudrun sate over the dead body of her lord, that her anguish fell very heavy on her, so that she was like to die. She sighed not, nor moaned, neither smote she her hands together like other women. She shook as though her heart would break. But she could not weep. Many wise Yarls came seeking to comfort her.

Hushed sate Gudrun; she spake not; the tears came not.

They said, 'Make her weep, or she will die.'

There came many noble Yarls' wives arrayed with gold, and sate beside her. Each told the sharpest sorrow she had known. Giaflaug, Giuki's sister, said, 'Of husband and children have I been bereft; of all my brethren and sisters. Lo, I am left behind to mourn until I go to them.'

Gudrun wept not.

Herborg, Queen of Hunland, said, 'My husband and seven sons fell in one fight. A captive was I carried away into a strange land, and there they set me to tie the shoe-latchets of that king's wife who slew them all; often was I beaten with the lash, and then only did I dare to sorrow for my dead.'

Yet none the more might Gudrun weep; so sad was she.

Then Gullrond, Giuki's daughter, came. She said, 'No sorrow but her own will bring the tears.' Down from the dead man's face she drew the cere-cloth, and turned the death-cold cheek to Gudrun, saying, 'Sister, look on him! Come, lay thy lips to his, and kiss him; for he loved thee well.'

She looked once only: saw the golden hair all stiff with blood; the body broken with the sword-rent. The tears upwelled and rained upon her knees. Fast wept Gudrun, Giuki's daughter.

Then she found words and spake: 'Like the bulrush towering from the grass, such was my Sigurd among Giuki's sons. As a pearl of price upon a king's brow, so glorious was my Sigurd

among men. How shall I sit upon my seat, or go up to my bed, and miss my Sigurd? Cursed be thou, Gunnar, for thy broken oaths! And cursed be the day when Sigurd saddled Grani to go a-wooing of Brynhild on the mountain!' Then cried Brynhild, 'A curse on her who brought thy tears and gave thee speech again!' And Gullrond said, 'Hast thou no pity—no compassion? Away, thou bane of man, thou woe of woman! Luckless thou camest to thy mother's lap, born for the sorrow of all folk.'

Sigurd's horse Grani, when he saw his master's corpse, made such a pitiful crying that Gudrun was fain to go and speak with him, even as a man talks with his friend. But he drooped his head and sank down on the earth and died.

By a pillar stood Brynhild, gazing on Sigurd's wound, and gloating over the woe of Gudrun. Howbeit Brynhild went presently up into her chamber and fell weeping bitterly. Gunnar and Hogni came to her, but naught their words availed to soothe her dreadful mind. She said, 'Sigurd is mine. Whither he goeth I will go; and none shall keep me from him now.'

Then Gunnar arose, and took her in his arms, and besought her that she would not die, but live, because of the love wherewith he loved her. But she put him from her, and would suffer none to hinder her. Then commanded she her people to bring forth gold and scatter it about. And when they had done according to her will, she took a sword and thrust herself through therewith beneath the arm-pit, and sank upon her pillows saying, 'Whoso will, let him come and take my gold and be glad thereof.'

Lying there, the while her blood flowed fast, Brynhild prophesied, and spake concerning all that should happen to the sons of Giuki and their kin, and of the sorrows yet in store for Gudrun.

Then her voice grew very tender, and she said to Gunnar, 'And now I beg the last boon I shall ask in this world. I pray thee raise a tall wood pile, and deck it royally about with shields and fair hangings. Uplift me thereon when I am dead, and bring Sigurd and lay him by my side. Only let there be set betwixt us a drawn sword, even as in those three days when we lay in one bed and were called man and wife together. So, as we go up to Valhalla, the shining door that openeth for him shall not swing to and shut me out.'

So saying, the life passed from her. Dead lay Brynhild on her pillows. Gunnar did all things as she had said. He built a mighty wood pile, hung round about with goodly hangings and

strewn with treasure; with hawks and hounds at the head and foot. On the pile he laid Brynhild and Sigurd; betwixt them a drawn sword. Then kindled he the bale-fire. The flames arose and wrapped the pile, and roared up to the sky. So ended they their life-days.

IV. THE FALL OF THE GIUKINGS.

Now Gudrun, being very bitter against her brethren, went away alone to mourn for Sigurd, and made her dwelling in the woods. And after long abiding there, she wandered forth, and came to King Alf's palace in Denmark, where, for seven years, she solaced her mind with setting forth in needlework of many colours the glorious deeds of kings and warriors. But when Queen Grimhild knew of her harbouring in Denmark she came journeying thither with her sons Gunnar and Hogni, and a great company of folk bringing gold and silver, seeking to make atonement to Gudrun for the slaying of her husband and her son. Softly they spake to her and would fain be reconciled. Howbeit Gudrun answered them nothing, and took no heed either of them or of their gifts.

Then Grimhild mixed a cold drink, and bare to Gudrun in a horn whereon strange blood-red runes were cut about the rim. The might of earth and sea was mingled in that drink. And it befell when Gudrun had drank of it that the memory of her wrongs passed away, and she remembered no more the blood-guiltiness of her brethren towards her. So after they had held fellowship together and made good cheer, Grimhild spake to Gudrun to wed with Atli, Budli's son, saying it would surely redound to the profit of them all, inasmuch as Atli was a king of great might. Gudrun was very loth thereto, thinking it an unseemly thing for her to wed with Brynhild's brother; but they so beset her with promises and threats that at last she yielded, saying, 'Little joy and great sorrow will come of it.' Lightly esteeming her words, they all made ready and set out and journeyed twelve days by land and sea, till they came to King Atli's mead-hall. There the Giukings gave their sister to Atli, to be his wife, and after the feast they rose up and departed to their own land. But Gudrun did not make merry, nor were her eyes bright like a bride's, nor was her heart gladdened when she looked upon her husband.

Years wore on and there was little fondness betwixt the two. Many times Atli fell thinking of the treasure which Sigurd gat from Fafnir, and how by right it should have been Gudrun's dower, whereas her brethren kept it back. And when he coveted the treasure very sore, Atli determined to send out men to go to the Giukings and bid them to a feast. But Gudrun got wind of it, and fearing some treachery to her brethren, took a gold ring and cut runes thereon to warn them not to come: and she knitted a wolf's hair in the ring and gave it to the messengers to take to Gunnar. But while they were on the journey, one of the messengers more subtile than the rest, by name Vingi, perceived how the runes ran; and he meddled with them in such wise as to make it seem as if Gudrun in her runes had prayed her brethren to come.

The messengers being come to Gunnar and Hogni in their mead-hall, the kings outpoured the wine and bade them welcome. And when the message was delivered, Hogni took his sister's ring and read the runes; but misdoubting them, he said, 'Brother, truly Gudrun in her runes saith "Come;" but what meaneth this wolf's hair in the ring, save a warning that Atli is minded as a wolf toward us?' Gunnar hearkened not. Merry over the mead he sate and listened whilst the smooth-tongued Vingi told how Atli was grown old, how his young children could not ward the realm, and how the purport of the bidding was to make the Giukings rulers over all the land. Loud laughed Gunnar, carousing with the messengers, and he raised aloft the mead-horn and passed his word to go. Hogni liked it not. He said: 'Too rashly hast thou pledged; but this being so, I will go with thee; yet very loth am I to the journey.'

Many tokenings there were of ill. Hogni's wife, Kostbera, who was skilled in runes, perceived that someone had tampered with the letters upon Gudrun's ring, and this she told Hogni plainly. Moreover, Kostbera dreamed of a rushing river that broke through the mead-hall, and of fire that burned the roof-tree; of a bear that overthrew the king's high seat, and of an erne that trampled women down and drenched them with warm blood. But Hogni made light of the dreams, or expounded them away in other fashion: for to none is it given to swerve from the fate shapen for him. In like manner Glaumvor, Gunnar's wife, told her lord what she had dreamed. She said: 'Methought I saw thee thrust through with a bloody sword, at either end whereof wolves howled. Sure that betokeneth somewhat?' 'Aye,' Gunnar said, 'a bloody sword betokeneth the biting of curs. A dog, perchance, shall snap

at me.' She said, 'But I dreamed again, and lo! three silent women, veiled and gloomy, came and chose thee for their mate. Methought they were thy fates.' He answered: 'Who can tell? It may be that my life-days are but few.' And when he rose up in the morning, he called his men about him and said, 'Come let us drink the goodliest wine from out the big old tuns, for may happen this shall be the last of all our feasts together.'

That same day Gunnar and Hogni gathered their folk together and took ship with the messengers. Hard they rowed across the sea-plain till they saw land, and brought the ship ashore; then leaped upon their steeds, and journeyed through the murky wood-land. At last they came out into open country. In front they saw a mighty host of men which King Atli had arrayed, and heard from afar the clanging of their weapons. Fast were the burg gates and full of men; but the Giukings brake down the gates and came into the burg. Then spake Vingi: 'How softly and with what sweet words did I beguile you hither! But now, tarry here a little, while I go and choose your gallows-tree.' Hogni answered: 'Little shall it avail thee to have beguiled us,' and so saying cast Vingi to the ground, and slew him with the hammer of his axe.

Then rode they to the king's hall, where sat Atli with his men about him. Atli gave them no greeting, but said: 'Deliver up Sigurd's gold; for it is Gudrun's portion, and long have I been minded to be lord thereof.' Gunnar answered: 'Thou shalt never have that gold; and if that be the purport of thy feast behold we are men of might, and shall not shrink to deal with thee in this matter.'

Straightway uprose the king and his men, and fell upon the Giukings. The tables were overset, the mead-cups rolled upon the floor. Hot waxed the fighting in the hall, and quickly spread about the burg. Gudrun heard tidings of it, and flung off her mantle and ran into the battle. Tenderly she kissed both her dear brethren, and said: 'Vain was my warning, for how shall a man avoid his lot? But yet there is time to seek for peace.' 'Too late,' they answered, 'for blood is outpoured, and many sleep the sword-sleep.' Then Gudrun put on a mail-coat and took a sword and fought beside her brethren, brave as they. Men fell fast on either side, and heaped the place with dead; the blood ran all about and mingled with the mead. Gunnar and Hogni went to and fro through Atli's folk, and wheresoever they went they reaped and men went down. At mid-day there was a lull in the battle; bitter was Atli's mind at the thinning of his host, yet still they were a host, the Giukings but a handful. Then they fell to

again. Atli cried on his men to drive the Giukings from the hall, and overwhelm them on the plain; but so hard the Giukings pressed on Atli's folk that they drave them back into the hall again. Then began within doors the fiercest of fights. Gunnar and his warriors hewed ever with their swords, but fast as they slew their enemies, fresh men poured in to take the places of them which fell. So at length when Gunnar would gather his folk together, he looked about and saw only his brother Hogni left alive. Then they twain set them back to back, and fought for their lives right manfully. But first Gunnar was hemmed in and taken alive. After that, Hogni slew a score of Atli's stoutest champions, and cast well nigh as many into the fire that burned in the midst of the hall: yet in the end he likewise was borne down by numbers, and with his brother bound in chains.

Atli was very wroth, and spake to Hogni saying, 'Now will I cut the heart out from thee before thine eyes, because by thy hand so many of my champions lie bereft of life.' Hogni answered: 'Do it, and thou shalt see a heart that never quailed.' But one came to Atli and counselled him saying, 'Let us rather take and put the thrall Hjalli to death: for naught else is he fit, and there is no ransoming to be gotten for him.' When Hjalli the thrall heard this, he began to cry aloud, weeping and screaming and bewailing himself or ever he felt the point of the knife: for an evil and a bitter thing it seemed to him to be cut off for ever from life and from the feeding of swine. Hogni, hearing him shriek and yell, pleaded for the man's life, saying that he would blithely endure that or any other death himself, if thereby he might be delivered from the thrall's uproar. So for that time Hjalli's life was spared.

Then were Gunnar and Hogni led away to prison in their fetters, and put in dungeons apart the one from the other. And King Atli came to Gunnar in his prison, saying, 'Tell me concerning Sigurd's gold, where thou hast hidden it, and I will spare thy life.' Gunnar answered: 'I will tell thee nothing unless I first behold the heart of Hogni my brother.'

Atli's men went and laid hold of the thrall and cut the heart out of him, and brought it to King Gunnar. But when he saw it, Gunnar said, 'That is a thrall's heart; it is the faint heart of Hjalli. See how it trembleth now; yet not so much as when it dwelt within his breast.'

Then went they unto Hogni in his prison. Hogni flinched not. Loud laughed he while they cut the heart from out of him, so that all wondered at the might of his manhood. They brought the

heart to Gunnar, and he said, 'That is a brave king's heart; it i the stout heart of Hogni my brother. Little it trembleth now and less it trembled when it lay within his breast.' Then Atl asked him, 'Tell me now where is thy gold?' But Gunna laughed him to scorn, saying, 'While Hogni was yet alive I feared betwixt the two of us, lest the matter should leak out. Now, alone know where the treasure is; and the secret is safe.'

Then waxed King Atli very wroth, and he commanded hi servants and they took Gunnar and bound his hands fast with cords and cast him into a pit of vipers. Howbeit Gudrun let harp down to him in the pit, and thereon King Gunnar harped s skilfully with his feet that none hearing it would deem other tha that he played with his hands. And with the might of his musi he charmed the vipers to sleep, all save one old and deadly adde which twined up his breast and smote its sting into him that h died.

After these things King Atli grew highly exalted, and was fai to make himself great in Gudrun's eyes because he had slain he brethren. And since Gudrun made no complaining, but rathe behaved herself kindlier to the king, saying that since all he kindred were dead and gone she had now none else to hold to bu her husband, Atli deemed her heart was rightwise toward him So when Gudrun would make a great funeral feast for her brethren he hearkened gladly, and sent and summoned all his chief me from far and near to come to the mead-hall. Very great an sumptuous he made that feast, for the glory of himself and of hi kingdom. And after meat, when all sat drinking round the board the king spake to Gudrun to fetch their children to the table, fo he said, 'It will gladden my heart to look upon the sons of the and me while we make merry with the wine.' She answere him, 'Thy sons are here. Behold, their skulls are beakers at th board; their blood is mingled with the wine which thou has drunk; their hearts I roasted on a spit, and thou hast eate thereof. So was I set to do thee as great shame as I might; ye in nowise shall the measure of thy deeds be full.' Then the kin grew sick at heart, and said, 'Quick and bloody has been th vengeance; but for this deed of thine most meet it were to ston thee and burn thy body on the bale-fire.' She answered, 'Fo me another death is shapen, but see thou rather and foretell thin own.'

Now Hogni had a son named Niblung. He came to the feast the heart within him burning to requite his father's death; an Gudrun and he took counsel together how they might bring i

about. So at night, when the king had well drunk and was gone up to his bed, they both came stealing into the chamber where he lay. Gudrun bare a sword in her hand, and Hogni's son grasped both hand and hilt in his, and together they drave it into the king's breast. Awaking with the wound, King Atli cried, 'Who art thou that hast done this deed?' There came the answer, 'I, Gudrun, thrust somewhat with my hand; somewhat the son of Hogni thrust; and we are both avenged!' Then Atli besought her with his last breath, saying, 'Now that the wrong betwixt us has been fully requited, I pray thee do no despite unto my dead corpse, but make me a kingly funeral.' When she had so promised him, King Atli died. And Gudrun did according to her word, for she and Hogni's son went out quickly and kindled the palace all about. Within were all the nobles and the mighty men of Atli's realm; and when they woke and felt the flames they ran hither and thither in their distress, and smote each other down or fell upon their swords rather than abide the fire. So perished Atli and all his folk with him.

Then Gudrun, grown weary of her life and longing to die, came down to the sea-shore where the billows tumbled round the rocks and boiled upon the beach. Within her arms she clasped great stones and cast herself into the sea. Yet would not the sea drown her; the waves upbore her on their crests and carried her far away to the burg of King Jonakr. He took Gudrun to wife, and she bare him three children whose names were Hamdir, Saurli, and Erp.

Now Gudrun had by Sigurd a daughter called Swanhild; and she sent across the sea and fetched her to Jonakr's court. Swanhild was an exceeding fair woman, with eyes bright like her father's, so that few durst gaze up into them. And it came to pass that a certain King Jormunrek, hearing how she far excelled all other women as the sun outshines the stars of the firmament, sent by the hands of Randver his son, and Bikki his counsellor, seeking her in marriage. And Jonakr and Gudrun, thinking it an alliance of great honour, gave Swanhild to them to be Jormunrek's wife, and the maiden sailed away with them in their ship. But while they were upon the voyage Bikki counselled Randver the king's son, saying, 'Why take so lovely a woman to that old man thy father to be his wife? More meet it were to woo her for thyself.' And the saying pleased Randver; and with many sweet words he began to woo Swanhild; in like manner also she answered him again. Nevertheless as soon as they were come to land Bikki went to the king and said, 'Truly a hard

thing it is to speak evil of the king's son, and much it goeth against me; but Randver has altogether estranged away the love of Swanhild from thee, and has taken her to wife himself to thy great dishonouring.' So Jormunrek's anger burned fiercely against his son, and he sent out straightway and had him hanged to a tree. Then by the counselling of Bikki was Swanhild bound hand and foot and led forth to the gate of the burg; and they brought wild horses and drave them at her to tread her down. But Swanhild looked upon the horses, and they shrank back because of the bright shining of her eyes; neither durst they come near her till Bikki fetched a bag and drew it over her head; then the horses ran in and trampled her to death.

When Gudrun heard what had befallen, she went to her sons Hamdir and Saurli, saying, 'What do ye here, rejoicing and making merry all the day? Rise up and go and avenge your sister upon Jormunrek the king!' But they dallied about and had no heart for the enterprise. Then Gudrun gave them strong drink from out of big flagons, and furnished them with weapons, and with coats of mail so cunningly fashioned that steel would not bite thereon. So they set forth on their errand; but on the way meeting Erp their brother, they asked him, 'How wilt thou help us in this business?' And when he answered, 'As hand helps hand, and as foot helps foot,' they deemed lightly of his help, and turned on him, and slew him for a fool. Presently as they went their way both brothers stumbled, but Hamdir saved himself with his hand and Saurli with his foot. Wherefore they thought 'Such help as Erp had promised us was not to be despised.' Howbeit they journeyed till they came to King Jormunrek's hall, and they went in and fell upon him both together. Hamdir cut off the king's hands and Saurli his feet. Then said Hamdir, 'His head likewise might we have cut off were Erp our brother here.' But by this they had to turn and fight with many warriors who ran in to slay them. Long they battled in the hall and smote down many a champion, till Jormunrek's folk waxed disheartened, because neither steel nor iron would bite upon their mail. Then came there into the hall a certain old man, one-eyed and austere to look upon, who said, 'Smite them with stones, so shall you bring these men to their end,' and passed out; neither wist any whither he went. So they took up stones and stoned Hamdir and Saurli that they died.

Now Gudrun when she knew of it, went into the fore-court of the palace, and sat musing how all her kindred, root and branch, were clean perished from off the face of the earth, and how she

alone was left of all the Giukings. Heavily she called to mind the many things which she had suffered, and being tired of heart and very weary, she sorrowed not to feel death creep upon her. And at the last all the troubles of her latter days seemed blotted out, and her mind went back to Sigurd. She said, 'O Sigurd, remember the pledge thou madest me when we were man and wife together. Now from thy sombre dwelling-place among the dead come forth and look on me a-dying: lift me in thy shadowy arms and bear me tenderly to Hel's pale kingdom!' So the words of her mourning had an end.

High they reared the oak-pile, higher than any queen had heretofore: swift burned the fire and thawed her sorrow-bounden heart: black the smoke-clouds rolled and billowed all along the sky.

The Nibelung Story.

I. THE WEDDING OF THE QUEENS.

In a palace by the Rhine, at Worms in Burgundy, dwelt fair Kriemhild, the loftiest lady in all Rhineland. Her brothers were three mighty men who knew how to guard her well; Gunther and Gernot well proven in fight, and young Giselher lithe as a sapling tree. As for the liegemen whom they ruled, no king of any country had men like their uncle Hagan and his brother Dankwart, Ortwine of Metz, Volker, Rumold and Hunold, and many more such champions.

With a strong hand reigned the brothers. They kept a sumptuous court, laughing all ill to scorn; they ate, they drank, they fought in sport for lack of foes; their enemies feared them, and their people abode in peace.

One night there came a dream to the lady Kriemhild as she lay sleeping in her beautiful palace. She dreamed that she had taken a young falcon and nourished it for a long season till it grew very dear to her, when suddenly two eagles darted down and tare it to pieces before her eyes. Weeping she awoke, and coming to her mother, Uta, told her dream. Her mother said, 'I read it thou wilt take a mate, and sorrow shall come of it. God's pity, child, on the man on whom thou settest thy mind!' Kriemhild answered, 'If that be all, fear nothing, mother, for I will never wed; so none shall suffer ill for me.' 'Aye, child,' said her mother, ''tis well enough to talk, but wedlock hath many pleasures, and we weary of a lonely life. And then, how fair thou art! God send thee a proper mate, my daughter, and thou wilt forget thy dreams.' 'Peace, mother. Pain evermore dogs pleasure's steps. I will have neither pain nor pleasure. I will live and die a maid, and so cheat sorrow.' Thus for a long while Kriemhild remained heart-whole in the palace, gay and frank of speech with all men, but favouring none.

Away in the Netherland, in a castle called Xanten, on the

Rhine-side, lived the young prince Siegfried, a stainless youth, so comely he was dear to all maidens, and so strong he was the pride of all men. One midsummer his father, King Siegmund, made him knight, and held high mass and royal festival with a seven days' feast in honour of his dubbing. How willingly the noblest maidens plied the needle to broider jewelled vestments for him to put on that day! How many hundred noble knights came up to tourney at the feast! What a glad woman was his mother, Queen Sieglind, when she saw her boy bear down the doughtiest of them, and bravely win his knighthood!

The feast being over, Siegfried set forth upon his travels, and wandered through many lands, winning everywhere great renown. Once as he journeyed he came to a hill-side where the fierce Nibelung and his brother Schilbung disputed as they counted a great treasure heap in front of a cave. These two brothers offered him their father's great sword Balmung, if he would divide the treasure between them. So Siegfried set to work at the task. But never was seen so great treasure: of precious stones there were at least a hundred waggon loads, and of red gold very much more. Siegfried began patiently to reckon up the gems and golden ornaments, but as weeks went by he began to find that his lifetime would not suffice to count so great riches. Then, angry at the delay, both brothers set on him with all their band; but Siegfried, gripping the sword Balmung, slew them both and put their men to flight. And after that he slew twelve of the Nibelungers' champions and seven hundred of their chiefs. Then waged he battle with the mighty dwarf Alberich, and overcame him, and took from him his cloudcloak; and he assembled all the Nibelungers and made them carry the treasure back into the cave again; and Alberich made he keeper of the treasure. So he won the countless hoard of gems and gold and the sword Balmung, and won the Nibelung land. Afterwards he slew a poison-spitting dragon, and bathed in the blood, whereby his skin being turned to horn no weapon would harm him.

When Siegfried came home again he heard folk talk of Kriemhild of Burgundy, how beautiful she was, yet so coy withal that she would listen to no man's wooing; and without heeding his father's warnings he chose eleven comrades, and, having clad them in the richest armour there was in the palace, took his journey to Worms, determined to win this damsel for his wife.

King Gunther and his uncle Hagan from the palace window saw them coming, and knew him for the famous man whose deeds were talked of far and wide. Wherefore when they rode into the

hall the king received them courteously; and Siegfried and his comrades bowed themselves before King Gunther. And Gunther spake, saying, 'Siegfried is welcome here; yet still we marvel what he would seek at Worms upon the Rhine.'

He answered: 'It is not my wont to hide a matter. Men told me that you have strong champions in Burgundy, and I am come to see. They say that you, King Gunther, are a man strong in fight. I too am a warrior; and, like you, have land and treasure in abundance. I shall rule my father's kingdom; and when I sit upon his throne I would have the people say of me, "He has nobly won us lands and liegemen." Wherefore, hear my purpose; I care not if you take it well or ill. I come to see whether of us twain is the stronger; I come to win your castles and your land and all that you possess, and to have you for my vassal.'

The king could hardly speak for anger, and the champions about him murmured loud.

Siegfried said: 'If you cannot keep your kingdom against all comers, let me rule it, for I can. But if you will fight, let your broad lands and mine be thrown into the scale, and whoso overcometh, let him be master over all.'

Then spake Gernot: 'Our lands are broad enough for us; we need no more. We are not for seizing a neighbour's land; being rightful masters of our own we are content.'

Grimly strode forward the burly Ortwine, Knight of Metz, saying, 'Who is this man that defieth the king?'

Then answered Siegfried: 'Who is he? A king. A mere king's man art thou: go, bring a dozen of thy fellows if thou wouldest fight with me.'

Thereon Ortwine called aloud for some to bring his weapons; but Gernot said, 'Peace: the man is a stranger and a guest; it may be we shall yet make friends with him. Small honour would be gained, good sooth, to slay a guest.' In like manner went Gernot to the other warriors, and forbade them to answer Siegfried's defiance, or take offence; and so stayed the broil.

Then King Gunther led Siegfried to the banquet-table, and when the wine was poured said, 'All that is ours is at your friendly service whenever in honour you choose to claim it.' And Siegfried being thereby appeased in mood, sat down to the feast, and afterwards joined the three brothers and their warriors in knightly sports. But whatsoever the pastime, whether hurling the stone, or flinging spear, or combat with the sword, there was none that could approach him. Fair Kriemhild, looking from her window, beheld a man of nobler presence and handsomer countenance than

she had ever seen; saw him foremost in all the games; watched him overcome her brothers and the strong champions of her land; and her eyes were never satisfied with beholding him.

Siegfried remained a long while at Gunther's court, yet caught never so much as a glimpse of the fair maiden on whom his heart was set. Then came tidings how Ludeger the Saxon and Ludegast King of Denmark had leagued together to come up against Burgundy with forty thousand men. And while Gunther and his brothers were ill at ease because of the tidings, Siegfried said, 'Leave me to deal with them. Stay you at home and frolic at your ease. I will take my eleven comrades, and a thousand of your men, and will go and meet these kings. Take you no further thought about the business.'

So Siegfried went forth as he had said, with his comrades and only a thousand men; Hagan and Ortwine, Dankwart, Sindold and Volker going also with him. In Saxony they met the host, and right well Siegfried proved his manhood, while all the champions of King Gunther marvelled at his deeds. They utterly routed their enemies and lost but sixty men. They took Ludeger and Ludegast alive, and brought them home with five hundred captives to the city of Worms. Then all the maidens flocked to hear, each what her knight had done in battle; only Kriemhild durst not come forth, but lovelorn abode in her bower and longed to know. Stealthily she sent for a youth who had seen the fight, and lightly asked him, 'I would know how the battle went, and how my brother Gernot fought, and if Hagan and Dankwart were brave.' He answered, 'There was not a coward in the fight; Gernot did well, and so did Hagan and Dankwart and Ortwine; but what were they, with all their prowess, to the Netherlandish knight! The like was never seen. Alone he brake the Saxon ranks, and with his own hand smote down Ludeger and took Ludegast prisoner. No mass of men could hem him in. Ask Ortwine or Hagan; all say the victory was Siegfried's. There is no man like Siegfried in all our host.' Then Kriemhild's glad cheek blushed rosy red at hearing Siegfried's praise, and she said to the youth, 'Take these ten marks of gold and a broidered vesture for thy pains.' He, wondering, went his way, while Kriemhild fed her mind with thinking on Siegfried's deeds.

Weeks wore on, yet Siegfried saw her not; till weary of waiting and yet too proud to speak his wish, he thought to go back to Netherland. But it fell out that Gunther asked Ortwine how he should make the Whitsun feast more famous in honour of their victory, and Ortwine answered, 'What more ennobles chivalry

than for knights to have fair maidens' eyes upon them at the tourney or the feast? Wherefore bid the lady Uta, and your sister Kriemhild and all fair dames and damsels, be there.' Therefore came Kriemhild forth from her bower walking to court in royal state, a hundred knights and a hundred damsels at her side. Fair as the morning when the sun makes clouds to blush and quenches all the stars, so Siegfried saw her, and looking, saw not her queenly raiment nor the sparkle of her jewels for the glory of her radiant face. Then gazing yet, he feared before her beauty and her royalness, and mused, 'How could I dare have thought to woo her.' So he stood stock-still, glowing white and red by turns, while spite of all his fear, his heart said, 'Give her up? Nay; rather die.'

Gernot came to his brother Gunther and said, 'Brother, by way of requiting Siegfried for what he has done for us, bid him come and be greeted by Kriemhild before all the people. To be greeted of her, who never yet greeted knight, will make this peerless warrior wholly ours.' And Gunther, thinking it would prove greatly to the profit of their kingdom, sent the noblest of his kinsmen to bid Siegfried to the court.

Glad was Siegfried, and he made haste and came to the court and stood before Kriemhild,—his face all aglow, his cheeks hot as fire beneath her love-bright eyes whereon he dared not look. Then Kriemhild softly said, 'Sir Siegfried, you are welcome—good and noble knight.' Thereon he raised his eyes, and as he looked in hers and she in his, both learned in silence all that either longed to know. Then as her brothers charged her, Kriemhild stooped from her high seat and kissed the knight in presence of all the people. Proudly Sir Siegfried lifted up his head, well paid for all his pains; while she sat blushing, but with pride alone, well knowing she had greeted the manliest man in all the court.

Then were the folk charged to make way for Kriemhild to go to the minster. But all the while the mass was singing Sir Siegfried chafed impatient of the song—and she the same—till after mass he came and stood beside her at the altar. Then Kriemhild took his hand, saying, 'God reward you, brave knight, for what you have done for Rhineland; for all men speak of your fame and worship as it well deserves in my esteem.' He, love-bewildered, looked into her eyes and answered, 'Dear lady Kriemhild, I will ever serve your brethren to my best, both day and night for your sweet sake.'

All twelve days of the feast it was awarded to Siegfried to walk

with Kriemhild and her train each day from her palace to the court. And when the feast was over they ransomed King Ludeger and King Ludegast at the price of five hundred mules' weight of gold, and made a covenant with them not to make war again on Burgundy, and sent them away. Then one by one the warriors took their leave to journey home; and Siegfried, sore against his will, ordered forth his steeds to go back to Netherland. But young Giselher won him to remain, saying, 'Tarry on with us; we have noble warriors and fair maidens for your company; and for our friendship's sake I do constrain you.' So Siegfried ordered back the horses and lingered on. What wonder, since he saw fair Kriemhild every day.

Now there lived in Issland beyond the sea a certain war-maiden, Queen Brynhild, who was not only very beautiful but so strong that she could hurl the spear and throw the stone further than any knight. And it was noised abroad that she would only wed the man that conquered her at three warlike games; but whoso tried and failed should suffer death for penalty. Thus many sought to win her heart and lost their heads, yet murmured not since death came from a hand so fair. And when Gunther would take a wife to be queen over Rhineland, he became love-struck at hearing the fame of Brynhild, and nothing would do but he must go and strive to win her. And Siegfried, when he knew it, spake to Gunther, saying, 'Go not. I tell you it is in vain. I know this terrible battle-maiden; four men could not withstand her furious strength.' Yet would not Gunther be persuaded, but said, 'Unless I win her, my good days are past. I can but die if she should vanquish me, and if I have her not I would not live. Only help me in this enterprise and I will hold nothing too dear for thy reward.' Siegfried answered, 'Give me Kriemhild thy sister for my wife, and I will help thee, and will bring this thing to pass.' And Gunther made a covenant with him, saying, 'I will surely give thee my sister on the day that Brynhild cometh into Rhineland.' Then they took counsel concerning the manner of their going. Gunther was for taking a great army across the sea, but Siegfried said, 'That would not avail against this mighty queen; her warriors are many; and the contest is with her alone. We will travel thither with only Sir Hagan and Sir Dankwart for company. Trust me, no thousand champions will care to fight us four. And since in Brynhild's land the warriors are most sumptuously arrayed, we will put on the fairest apparel that can be got, so we be not put to shame before her lieges.' For seven weeks Kriemhild and her maidens wrought

precious vestments for the warriors, three changes for every day; rich garments of silk, trimmed with ermine and skins of birds and fish from distant lands, and sewn with precious stones and golden thread. And when the work was done and the warriors had arrayed themselves, Kriemhild gave her brother into Siegfried's charge, saying, 'I pray thee see no harm befall him from fierce Brynhild's hand;' and this he promised her. Then went they down to the ship, and Siegfried took the helm and steered along the Rhine. On the twelfth morning they saw a mighty fortress on a rock, and fair broad lands with castles all along the coast; and Siegfried said, 'That is Brynhild's fortress, Isenstein; those are her lands and castles.' Then charged he his companions that they should say when they landed, 'Gunther is master, Siegfried is but his man.'

They came ashore and saw a three-fold palace with more than fourscore turrets. The castle gates flew open and the warders took from each man his horse and shield. Then the chamberlain required them to lay aside their weapons; and when Hagan would not at first, Siegfried told him it was the usage of the maiden's court; so, grumbling he obeyed.

Queen Brynhild sat in a fair wide hall of pure green marble, her maidens round her. One came and told her of the guests; she asked who they were; he answered, 'I know them not, save only that one is like Siegfried of the Netherland.' Then said Brynhild, 'Bring hither my armour, for great as is Siegfried's renown I fear him not so deeply as to yield to be his wife.' And Brynhild girt on her golden breastplate and an Indian silk surcoat which no steel could cut, and coming forth from her hall at the head of five hundred chosen warriors, drew near to Siegfried, saying, 'Welcome brave warrior; tell me now thine errand.'

Siegfried answered, 'Pardon, fair lady, but thy greeting befitteth rather my master, King Gunther, who for love of thee comes hither from Rhineland, and will never return, so he has sworn, till he can take thee with him as his bride. I am but his man.'

Then said Brynhild, 'If he be thy master and thou art but his man, let him now play with me at three war-games. If he conquer me in all I will not scorn to be his wife, but if he fail in one, master and men shall die. He must cast the stone with me, and leap with me, and fling the javelin.'

Then Siegfried whispered to Gunther, 'Fear not, for I will hold you harmless.' So Gunther answered her, 'Fair Brynhild

for your beauty's sake, willingly shall I dare the contest and the penalty.'

A ring was marked. Seven hundred harnessed champions gathered round to see the fray. Meanwhile Sir Siegfried hasted to the ship, and from a secret corner there drew forth the cloud-cloak which he won from the dwarf Alberich, keeper of the Nibelungs' treasure and put it on:—such was the virtue of the cloak that it gave its wearer the strength of twelve strong men, yet hid him like a cloud from all men's gaze.

To the ring came Brynhild, gold spangles glittering on her silken surcoat; and, rising and falling with her eager breath, the silken vesture gave glimpses of her snowy skin. Four servants staggered bearing her huge golden shield, steel-studded, three spans thick; its thong a leathern band, grass-green with emeralds. Three men scarce bore along the javelin which she used to fling; its point three weights of iron welded into one, and sharpened deadly keen. Twelve brawny knights panted beneath the load of the great round stone which she hurled; and when they let it down it shook the solid ground.

Then said Dankwart, 'Better we had stayed at home, where once we passed for warriors, than die disgraced before a woman without a struggle for it.'

'Woman! good lack,' cried Hagan—'a bride for a fiend. One thing is certain; were I Gunther I could deem it sweeter to sleep the sword-sleep at her hand than lie with such a darling at my side. Yet, had we our arms and harness on our backs to help our king, methinks we might abase this maiden's pride.'

Brynhild heard his words, and looking over her shoulder, answered in scorn, 'Go get them; I will deny nothing to my guests. Your puny help will succour him perchance as much as it will trouble me.' So they armed themselves and stood beside Gunther. Brynhild at the far end of the ring, her snow white arms all bare, was poising the spear in hand. Straightway Siegfried in his cloud-cloak came up unseen, and touched Gunther on the hand. The king looked round but saw no man. He said, 'Who touched me?' Siegfried answered, 'Hist! It is I, Siegfried, thy friend. Quick; unsling thy buckler; give it me to bear. Do as I bid thee. Make thou the gestures; leave me the contest.'

With all her might the strong maid flung the massy spear. It crashed into the buckler, yet Siegfried's hand which bare it shook not, though the two men staggered with the blow. Then whilst Gunther made as though he would pull out the spear from

the shield, Siegfried, unseen in his cloud-cloak, plucked it forth and hurled it butt-end foremost at the maid again, for he thought it were a shame to send the point against so fair a damsel. Yet even so, the javelin fastened quivering in Brynhild's shield; and with the mighty shock she tottered to and fro and fell upon the plain. Quick she upstarted, crying, 'I thank thee, Gunther, for that stroke.' For in truth she deemed it was his work.

Angrily she heaved up the great stone and brandished it about her head, then flung it twelve fathoms away, and leaping, sprang beyond the stone-cast. Gunther ran to where the stone lay, and seized it. Men thought that he flung it, not seeing Siegfried grip the rock in his hands and hurl it half as far again as Brynhild. Then Siegfried caught the king about the waist and bounded with him to where the stone pitched. All men saw the leap; but there was no one against the stone save Gunther only.

Sullenly queen Brynhild called her warriors. 'Come hither, men and kinsmen: I am no more your mistress; bow low to Gunther, you are his liegemen now.' Then made they all obeisance to King Gunther and owned him as their lord. But Siegfried hasted away to the ship to take off his cloud-cloak; and when he came back, finding Gunther and his companions in the palace, he said, 'Why tarrieth the king from the games? Come let us to the ring and see the contest.'

Brynhild answered, 'Where hast thou been, good Siegfried, not to know that the games are done and King Gunther has overmastered me?' Then said Siegfried, 'I was busy in the ship the while; but truly I am glad to know my master has taught so proud a maiden submission.'

Some days went by while Brynhild made ready for her journey to the Rhineland. She sent to gather all her friends and liegemen to Isenstein, to receive gifts of gold and rich raiment; and as Hagan beheld how great companies flocked early and late to the castle, his mind misgave him of some treachery, and he spake with Siegfried thereupon. Siegfried said, 'Fear not. I am going a journey alone; ask not where or why, but tarry here for me.'

Then went Siegfried down to the sea-shore and put his cloud-cloak on, and entering a little boat which he found tied there, put out to sea. Men marked the boat as it bounded over the waves, but could perceive neither oarsman nor steersman, and they marvelled, thinking that it was driven by a storm. All night and day Siegfried rowed until he reached a coast where was a meadow and a castle on a hill. He tied the boat, went straightway to the castle and beat upon the gate. A huge earth-

shaking giant, the porter at the gate, yawning as he woke, cried gruffly, 'Who knocks so loud?'

Siegfried answered, 'A warrior who is loth to wait till lazy louts have done their snores. Open the gate.' The giant seized a heavy iron bar, and taking his ponderous shield in hand, flung wide the doors. Then followed so fierce a fight that the sound of the blows reached the hall of the Nibelungers. Alberich the dwarf heard it in his hollow hill, and straightway came hasting to the place, but found Siegfried conqueror and the giant lying bound upon the earth. The dwarf had a golden scourge made of seven heavy knobs of gold, which swung from a handle by seven thongs. With this he beat Siegfried's shield to splinters; but still the knight of Netherland disdained to draw his sword upon his chamberlain. He flung his broken shield away, and taking the hoary dwarf by the beard shook him to and fro till he roared with pain. 'Hold, master,' cried Alberich, 'for pity's sake let go. I will do all your bidding; but—what is your name, kind sir?' He answered, 'My name is Siegfried; you have heard it I think before to-day.' The dwarf said, 'Well-a-way! So Siegfried is it? To think I should not know my master! Let me go—what must I do?'

'Go straight and summon a thousand Nibelungers; equip them well, and bring them with all speed to Issland to Queen Brynhild's castle.' Siegfried let him go, and the dwarf fared blithely on his errand.

Queen Brynhild looked out from her castle, and seeing many white-sailed ships coming to land, she said to Gunther, 'What are these?' Gunther answered, 'They are guests of mine who come to greet these guests of thine.' And when Brynhild found Siegfried among them, she welcomed them all to land.

Then said the queen, 'Will someone give away my gifts of gold and silver to the guests? It is no unthankful office, since I have wealth enough in store.'

Dankwart said, 'Give me the keys, fair queen. Trust me I will so distribute it that all shall be content.'

But no sooner had Dankwart taken the keys than he scattered gold and silver right and left to all that came; the very beggars in the street he clad in courtly raiment, and to him that asked a mark he gave enough to make him rich for life. Never had queen so lavish a treasurer before. And when Brynhild spake to Gunther to stop this wasting of her wealth, Hagan said, 'Never fear, great queen, the king of Rhineland hath treasure in such plenty that we may well afford to squander thine.' Nevertheless,

Brynhild was fain to save twenty chests of her vestments and jewels, and these she would not trust either with Dankwart or Hagan. Then with a hundred maidens in her train, a thousand of her chosen warriors, and the thousand Nibelunger knights, Brynhild and Gunther set out for Rhineland.

A royal greeting Queen Uta prepared for her son's fair bride. With all her knights and damsels in her train she rode to the beach to welcome her. And when Brynhild was come forth from the ship, Kriemhild came down from her palfrey and ran and took her hands and kissed her, saying, 'Welcome, dear sister Brynhild.' Hard would it be to say whether of the two maidens was the more beautiful, she of Issland or she of Rhineland.

Then King Gunther prepared a royal feast, and spread silken pavilions in the plain before the city, and held jousts and games. And at the end of the tournament came Siegfried to the king, and brought to his mind the promise he had made. Gunther said, 'What I have vowed that will I now perform.' Then sent he to summon Kriemhild to the hall. And the king spake to his kinsmen and to them which sat at table with him, 'Think you that Siegfried is a worthy man to wed my sister?' They all answered, 'He is worthy.' So when Kriemhild was come he said to her, 'Sister, I pray thee of thy kindness to set me free from an oath which I have made; for I have vowed thee in marriage to a knight.'

She answered, 'Dear brother, I will do thy will, and take for husband him thou givest me.'

Then Gunther brought Siegfried to her, saying, 'This is the knight whereof I spake. Wilt thou take him for thy husband?'

Kriemhild blushed, looked gladly in Siegfried's face, and laid her snow-white hands in his—he, naught ashamed, put his strong arms round her and kissed his bride before them all.

Now at the feast, when Brynhild sat by Gunther, she espied how Kriemhild sat by Siegfried, and being very angry said to the king, 'I cannot rest to see your sister sitting content at a thrall's side. Bid her come and sit by us—not mingle with thy men.'

He answered, 'Peace. We will talk of this another time. I have given her to wife to Siegfried for an oath's sake. Ask not why; what is done is done.'

'His wife? Thy sister given to thy man? Until I know why thou hast done this thing, thy queen I may be, but thy wife I will not be.'

Gunther said, 'Know then, Siegfried is not my man. He is a very great king, with broad lands and castles of his own. Let that suffice thee.'

But Brynhild pondered this within her mind and could not rest content. If Siegfried were so great a king, why served he Gunther? Or if he were but Gunther's man, wherefore should Gunther give him his sister?

Night came, and the royal chamberlains, with trains of youths and maidens, led brides and bridegrooms to the wedding chambers. But no sooner was Brynhild alone with Gunther, than she turned fiercely on him and refused to be his wife till he should tell what service Siegfried had done that he must needs give him Kriemhild, and what oath that was whereof he spake. Idle were Gunther's loving words. He dared not tell her what she asked; she would not suffer his caresses, but in fury flung him half across the room, then kneeled upon his chest, and with the girdle from her waist bound her new bridegroom hand and foot, and hung him to a nail, and let him dangle there till daylight, whilst she lay down and slept alone upon the marriage-bed. At morning she untied him, lest the servants bringing the gay marriage-robes should see his shame, and both be sport for babbling tongues. All day King Gunther was a moody man amidst a merry-making court. At last he came to Siegfried, who for the very fulness of his joy cared not to join the noisy crowd but mused apart, and told what had befallen him. 'Look at my wrists and ankles swollen with those cursed cords; her fingers are like iron; her clutch is like some dragon's. What can I do? I love her, terrible as she is.' Siegfried answered, 'Leave all to me. I will tame this fury for thee. To-night, wrapped in my cloud-cloak, I will hie me to thy chamber. Watch thou, and trust thine honour in my hands.'

So when night came, Siegfried put on his cloud-cloak and went with Gunther into Brynhild's chamber. He put out the tapers; then mimicking the voice of Gunther, he spake to Brynhild and lay down at her side. 'Hast thou forgotten yesternight?' she said; and took up Siegfried like a child in her strong arms, and hurled him with his head against an oaken bench. He started up and wrestled with the mighty maiden. They hurtled to and fro in savage fight, now here, now there, about the room, while Gunther had to dodge on tiptoe in the dark from place to place lest Brynhild should light on him and find that the man with whom she struggled was not her mate. Brynhild gripped Siegfried round the arms, and by main force lifted him off his feet, and jammed him up against a press that stood by the bedside. Then, whilst with her shoulder she fixed him there, she clutched his two hands in one of hers so tight that the blood gushed from his finger-tips, the while with her other hand she sought to loose

her girdle wherewith to bind him. Siegfried put forth his strength, and after a great struggle freed his hands, and gat his feet again; then closing with the fierce woman he threw her headlong backwards on the floor. Heavily she fell, half-stunned, quite helpless, wholly conquered. She said, 'No more will I provoke thy strength. Henceforth, King Gunther, I will be thy docile wife.' Siegfried softly arose and left the chamber; but bore away two trophies with him—he had slipped Brynhild's ring from off her finger, and drawn the loosened girdle from her waist. And these, whether in wilfulness or sport, he gave to his wife. Kriemhild took the ring and girdle, but for a long time wist not whence they came.

On the morrow Gunther and his queen sat blithely at the wedding feast, as happy a pair as might be; and from that morning Brynhild lost all her marvellous strength and became weak as any other woman.

Soon after this Siegfried took his wife home to Netherland. And when he came to Xanten, Siegmund his father lifted the crown from off his head and made Siegfried king. So Siegfried remained there to rule that country, and held besides all the land of the Nibelungers in fee. As time went on Kriemhild bore him a son, whose name they called Gunther for his uncle's sake, and about the same season Brynhild bare a son to King Gunther, and they called his name Siegfried.

II. THE CROSSLET ON THE VESTURE.

Now Brynhild continually pondered in her mind why Siegfried came not to do homage for his lands. And she often spake to her lord, saying, 'This Siegfried, since he is thy man, how comes it that he does thee no service, pays no tribute, yields no homage?' After a while, King Gunther, being wearied at her asking, promised to bring Siegfried and his wife to Worms. And since he could not command them to obey, he sent messengers to seek their presence, for friendship's sake, at a great festival which he would hold at midsummer.

When the messengers told Siegfried their errand, he promised that he would come, and having loaded them with presents and given them gold treasure as much as their horses could carry, sent them back again to King Gunther.

At midsummer Siegfried came to Worms, bringing with him fair Kriemhild and Siegmund his father, and a great company of his warriors, but his child he left at home in Netherland. Gunther and his queen received them as befitted royal folk, and day by day held tournaments in their honour. But still Queen Brynhild could not rest from her desire to know why Siegfried paid no homage, notwithstanding Siegfried had himself told her that he was Gunther's man. And one evening as Brynhild viewed the jousts, Kriemhild, sitting beside her, said, 'Look at my husband, how strong and brave he is! Where is the man that can compare with him in aught? Am I not right to be proud that he is mine —the most peerless knight in all the world?'

Brynhild answered, 'Aye, thou mayest be proud of him when Gunther is not by. But howsoever strong is Siegfried so much the prouder I; for I have wedded his master. Nay, deny it not. I had it from his lips as well as Gunther's. For when my lord subdued me in the fight Siegfried himself told me, "Gunther is master, I am but his man." Nay, blush not for Siegfried, he is a better thrall than most; a good vassal to his lord.'

'Master? Lord? Siegfried hath none,' cried Kriemhild angrily.

'He is our thrall,' answered Brynhild; 'and all that hold of him are our thralls likewise.'

Kriemhild answered, 'Indeed! And since thou rulest us all, how cometh it to pass that we pay thee no homage and always deny thee service? Nay, I will endure thy taunts no longer. Hold thy peace.'

Then said Brynhild, 'It becometh not a thrall's wife to bear herself too loftily. So since thou wilt be humbled, we will see to whether of us twain shall be paid the greater respect—to thee the vassal's wife, or to me his lord's.'

Kriemhild said, 'Be it so. I will prove this night that I dare enter the minster with all my train before Gunther's queen.'

Then flashing with anger both women left the lists, and each went and put on her most costly raiment and richest jewels to outdo the other. Brynhild looked up the very finest Arabian stuffs from her chest wherewith to deck herself. Kriemhild clothed her maidens more sumptuously than any women yet were clad in Burgundy; but she herself put on apparel stiff with jewels, worth the robes of thirty queens, and all to anger Brynhild. Men thought it strange to see the queens walking to the minster apart, their trains wide-sundered, when hitherto they had gone side by side.

To the minster door came Brynhild, panting with anger scarce

controlled, and cried, 'Stay, vassaless; make way for the lady of the land!'

Kriemhild's blood was up, and she answered, 'Vassaless good sooth! And how much loftier is a vassal's wanton than his wife? When Gunther could not win nor tame thee, my husband Siegfried did the work. Thou dishonoured thing, abase thyself and let me pass.' Tears started out from Brynhild's eyes for rage and shame. And whilst she wept, and cried 'It is false, vile woman; Gunther shall know of this,' Kriemhild spurned her away, and with her train passed through the minster door.

All through the service Brynhild sat with a weight like lead upon her mind; she thought that chant and psalm would never come to an end. But when at last it was over, she hasted forth and stopped Kriemhild outside the church door, whilst knights and ladies gathered round to hear.

She said, 'You shall go no further. Stop and do me right. You called me wanton. Prove it.'

Kriemhild answered, 'Better ask me to be silent. Remember Siegfried is but a lowly lover—a vassal. But if you will have your shame made plain before the crowd I care not. See this ring upon my hand. Siegfried brought it to me from your chamber.'

'It's a foul lie,' said Brynhild. 'Many a year I missed the ring, and now I know the thief.'

Kriemhild said, 'Thief? Why will you not hold your peace and hide your shame? I am no thief. Behold your girdle which I wear about my waist. That Siegfried brought me likewise.'

Brynhild looked and saw that it was her girdle. Well she knew it; made of Nineveh silk glittering with precious stones. Then breaking out in a passion of tears, she said, 'Go some one; fetch King Gunther hither. He shall know what his sister says of me.'

When Gunther came and saw his queen weeping bitterly, he took her tenderly to him and asked what had befallen her.

She answered, 'Thy sister would rob me of my good name—she says that Siegfried has boasted of my love. And see, she wears my girdle and my ring to put me to an open shame.' King Gunther said, 'If Siegfried has so boasted he shall deny it, or one of us shall die.' And he bade them send for him. Presently came Siegfried, knowing nothing of what had happened, and wondering to see the anger of the queens. Gunther told why Brynhild wept; then asked him, 'Sir Siegfried, is it true that thou hast won Queen Brynhild's love? And hast thou boasted so?

Siegfried answered frankly, 'It is not true, nor have I boasted so; nor spake I at any time such words to my wife.' Thereto he uplifted his hand and sware before all the men of Burgundy. And he said, 'Sore it grieveth me that my wife should have set thine at naught. But we must teach our women to leave off idle talking and to rule their tongues. Keep thou thy wife in order; I'll do the same by mine.'

Then was King Gunther pacified, and said, 'It is enough. I heartily believe thee free from blame in this matter.' But Hagan and Ortwine of Metz were very angry and would never believe but Siegfried, in some boastful fit, had foully slandered their queen, and that what his wife spake she heard from him. Wherefore Hagan continually stirred up the king against Siegfried in secret, prompting him ever to spill his blood, and saying, 'If he is guiltless how came he with the ring and the girdle? So long as Siegfried lives our queen's good name will be bandied about by every prating tongue.' For a long time Gunther heeded him not, or only answered, 'Siegfried was ever true to us in word and deed;' but as Hagan and Ortwine harped all day upon the wrong done to the queen, showing besides how Gunther might become king both of the Netherland and the Nibelung men if Siegfried were destroyed, and as Brynhild would not let him rest at night for urging the same thing, he began to hearken. Yet said he, 'Siegfried is so strong of hand that it would be vain for any of us to take this quarrel up.' Hagan answered, 'Fear not but I will compass his death either by strength or subtlety. Only give me leave.' So he persuaded Gunther to get strange messengers to ride as though from Ludeger and Ludegast to defy the Burgundians to battle; and to see what would come of it.

Accordingly one morning, as Hagan had arranged, there came two-and-thirty messengers to the king. And Siegfried, seeing them, said to Gunther, 'Who are these men? And what meaneth this whispering in the court betwixt you and Hagan and Ortwine?' The king said, 'Good cause have I for sorrow, since Ludeger and Ludegast threaten to come and ravage all my land again.' 'If that is all,' laughed Siegfried, 'be of good cheer. Stay you at home with your warriors at the hearth side. I and my knights will now go forth and bow these men beneath your yoke again; and people shall say, "King Gunther had in Siegfried a better friend for friendship's sake than liege had ever vassal that did homage for land or fee."'

Siegfried made no delay but gat his arms and harness, and gathered his men together. Then went the wily Hagan to take

leave of his cousin Kriemhild. And Kriemhild said to him, 'Is not mine a brave lord, that can give so strong a succour to his friends! I am glad this has befallen so, for now my husband will make amends for all my folly and my wrong to Brynhild. Perchance she will forgive me then,—when Siegfried for my sake has slain her foes and comes home conqueror. It was my fault, not his. But that you know; for Siegfried said so. You heard him before all the people. He could not lie—not even to shield me—and for his speaking truth and shaming me I love him better than if he had lied. I know not how I could have spoken thus, and made such mischief with my tongue. I would not, only Brynhild galled me so.'

Hagan answered, 'Aye, aye; we all know that full well. But, lady, tell me, is there any service I might do for Siegfried in the war? For in truth I love no man better than I love him.'

She said, 'O, I fear not that any man will slay my husband. I know his might and valour.'

'Aye, lady; so do both friends and foes. Yet he is but a mortal man; and since his life is very precious to us all it was my thought to watch by him through the fight, lest harm should befall him by any treachery or misadventure. We dare not lose him, lady.'

She answered, 'It is kind of thee, good Hagan; and since thou art my cousin I gladly trust him in thy keeping, and will tell thee a secret known to him and me alone. When Siegfried slew the dragon, you know how he bathed him in the hot blood and made his flesh sword-proof. Dear friend, no other creature knows what I am going to tell: I pray thee safely treasure it.—But as he bathed, there fell a leaf from off a linden tree and lay betwixt his shoulders, and that tiny place alone the blood washed not. There only steel may pierce my darling; often through the battle-time I tremble lest in the cloud of darts some one may find its way there and I lose the mate so dear to me. There guard him with thy shield, dear friend, and God and I will bless thee.'

Hagan said, 'I pray thee sew me a token in his outer garment, that I may surely know where most to guard him.' She told him, 'I will sew a little crosslet with fine silk upon his vesture. So shalt thou know. I charge thee keep him safe. Farewell.'

Afterward Hagan set off with Siegfried and the host. And as soon as they had journeyed a little way and Hagan had carefully espied the crosslet, he sent forward men to go away to a distance and return in guise of messengers from Ludeger and Ludegast to offer submission and beg for peace.

Fretting to be baulked of his war-play, Sir Siegfried turned his

horse and brought the host back again. In the palace he found King Gunther who, being counselled by Hagan, said they would all go a-hunting in Odenwald. And Siegfried, grown restless at not having men to hunt, was glad to go and hunt the wild boar. But Gunther's brethren, Gernot and Giselher, knew the plot against Siegfried's life and either feared or were ashamed to go to the hunt; yet held they their peace and let him ride forth to his death unwarned.

But first Sir Siegfried went to bid farewell to Kriemhild. He took her sweet face betwixt his hands and lifted up her rosy mouth to his to kiss, saying, 'God bring me safe back to see these dear bright eyes again.' But Kriemhild's eyes grew dim because of an ill foreboding which scarce took shape within her mind. She thought on the secret she had told Hagan, yet dared not own it to her lord; so she only hid her head in his breast and sobbed. She said, 'Dear lord, go not a-hunting. I dreamed last night I saw thee chased by two wild swine across the heath, and the flowers in the track turned bloody red. My heart is chilled with fear of losing thee. O stay!' He answered, 'Foolish child, dry up thy tears. What cause have I for fear? Not a soul in Rhineland beareth me ill-will. I go with friends, not against enemies; for pastime not for war. Be comforted; be blithe and merry with thy kinsmen, and, ere thou knowest, Siegfried will be at thy side again.'

She clung to him and twined her arms about his neck. 'Nay; go not, I pray thee. Leave me not. Last night I dreamed that mountains fell above my head and shut me out from thee for ever. My heart will break if thou dost go.'

Tenderly he unclasped the winding arms; thrice kissed her; and passed out. It seemed to Kriemhild that the sunshine went out too, for the gloom that fell on her.

No hunter surpassed Siegfried that day. The first beast that his lime-hound started was a half-bred boar; him Siegfried struck dead at a stroke. Then found he a lion in a thicket and drew his bow and shot him through. He brought down a buffalo, an elk, four strong wild oxen, and many a swift hart and hind. A great wild boar ran furious at him, but Siegfried, scorning to harry the beast with spears, fought him with his sword Balmung instead, and slew him. He chased a bear, bound him with cords and brought him alive, tied at his saddle-bow, to where the cooks and scullions were making ready the hunters' meal at a great fire in the wood. A savoury smell of roast and boiled and dainty stews rose from the pots and pans about the pine-fire

Then sat they all down right merrily to the feast. But Siegfried looked about and began to murmur, saying, 'There is truly no lack of meats of every kind, but where, good comrades, is the wine?'

Then said false Gunther, 'Hagan is to blame who makes us die of thirst.'

And Hagan said, 'I am indeed to blame. I thought the hunting of to-day was to be held in the woodpecker's haunt; thither by mishap I sent the wine. But yonder among the trees runneth a little brook; the water is bright and cold; there let him drink that is athirst.'

Now as Hagan had beforetime ordered it, only he and King Gunther rose up to go with Siegfried to the brook. And they made a race as though in sport, which should first reach the linden-tree that grew by the stream-side. But Siegfried far outstripped them both, and gained the tree, and leaned his spear and sword and buckler thereby; yet for all he was so parched, of his courtesy he would not quench his thirst till the king should first have drunk. And when the two came up, first Gunther stooped over the stream and took his draught, then rose and stepped aside. Afterward kneeled Siegfried down to drink. And while he drank, Hagan came softly and took the sword and bow from against the tree and hid them; then spied he for the sign on Siegfried's silken coat, and having found it, seized the spear and drave it with a trembling, frightened hand, right through the crosslet betwixt Siegfried's shoulders. The life-blood spouted on his murderous fingers; he, white with terror, left the spear sticking there and fled.

Siegfried felt that he was death-stricken. He gat upon his feet; he looked round for his weapons, but neither bow or sword was there. Only his shield remained. He caught it in his hand and ran, while every bound jagged the great boar-spear in his aching back. He ran at Hagan, and step by step gained on the man, till, having well-nigh overtaken him he stopped and hurled his great shield at the murderer. It smote the coward's buckler, shivered it in pieces and felled him to the ground, while all the wood resounded with the blow. Then Siegfried grieved because he had no sword wherewith to slay his enemy. But immediately he sickened with his wound; death-pallor came into his face; his strength was loosed; his sinews slackened; his eyes grew dim as though a cloud veiled them. Upon his face he fell along the grass, and stained the flowers with his blood.

Warriors from all sides came running up. They gathered

about and lifted up his head. Siegfried, writhing in mortal anguish, upbraided his murderers with his dying breath. 'Foully have you done, O cowards, thus to repay the service of a faithful friend! Unwisely have you done, O fools; and you will rue it sore! Cursed be ye and all that henceforth from your loins shall spring. Alas, that I loved Gunther, saved his life, his honour, and his land, for this reward!'

The false king bowed his head and wept for shame.

'Nay, weep not,' Siegfried moaned; 'to plot a murder and then weep for it only maketh a man the more despised. But if thy black heart hath any pity left, I pray thee befriend my dear love and lady. She is thy sister; guard her, I pray, as king and brother should. And that she may find favour in thy sight, remember all I did for thee—forget how thou rewardedst it.'

He spake no more. Awhile he lay seeming to fight with Death as with some ancient foe; then hid his face in the grass; a shuddering went through his limbs; then came a calm, and the faithful knight lay dead beneath the trees.

When Gunther's chiefs knew certainly that Siegfried was dead, they took him up and laid him on a golden buckler, and bare him forth from the wood. And every man that went hunting in Odenwald that day sware to keep Hagan's secret, and to abide by one tale—to wit, that Siegfried must needs go hunting alone, and they had come upon his body slain by robbers in the wood.

In the dark night Hagan and his men carried Siegfried's body and laid it down athwart the threshold of Kriemhild's door, and departed.

The matin bell, ringing before the dawn, waked Kriemhild and her maids, and straightway they arose to go to matins at the minster as they were wont. Her chamberlain stumbled on the body in the dusk, and not knowing who it was, ran in to tell his lady how a dead knight lay before her door.

Quick answered she, ''Tis he, my love, my Siegfried lies before my door!' She shrieked and fell, blood oozing from her pallid lips. Morning had come when she wakened from her swoon: her women hushed their whispers and their tears. She looked at their white faces and knew her fears were true. They, thankful not to have to tell her, dumbly led her through the door. They watched her lift the blood-bedabbled corpse within her lily arms; saw her, ere she stayed to kiss the leaden lips, go searching all about to find the wound, mute as a tigress seeking the hunter's death-mark on the body of her young. Then she

lulled it in her arms and rained down tears upon the quiet face. She saw the crosslet pierced, knew well the work was Hagan's, the bidding Brynhild's, and the folly hers.

The hoary Siegmund came, and, lifting up his voice, bewailed his only son, snatched from him in his age. The Nibelung men, and they of the Netherland, came crowding up, and fiercely talked in groups, till group by group they made one throng and cried out with one voice and mind, 'To the palace! Away with Gunther and his men! We will root them from the earth!' But Kriemhild spread forth her hands and besought them, saying, 'Waste not your lives for naught. They have thirty men for every one of you. God will avenge us; only wait. Let me find the man that slew my darling. If God forbear to smite him, I will not. But O not now, for I must weep. Be patient; weep with me awhile, good friends, and help me coffin my dear lord.'

All through the city knights and dames lamented the sad fate of Siegfried, wondering if he died by treachery or mishap. They gossipped on, and marvelled much; had many tales to tell and hear, but knew not aught. The men that hunted in Odenwald kept the secret as they sware to do.

They laid the dead man on a bier and bare him to the minster. They set the bier before the altar and sang a requiem. And when the mass was done King Gunther said, 'Alas, my sister, for the sorry mischance which hath bereaved thee.'

Kriemhild answered, 'If mischance it be, and thou and thy men are guiltless, fear not; but go, each of you—pass one by one before the bier; so shall the guilt of him who did this thing be plainly seen by all the people.'

Truly it is a great marvel, appointed of old to mark the shedder of blood, that whensoever the murderer approacheth a corpse the wounds break out a-bleeding. So it befell that when Hagan drew nigh to Siegfried's dead body the blood burst from the wound afresh, and ran down off the bier about the altar stone. And seeing the sign, the people whispered and made room for Hagan till he stood apart. Then said Gunther, 'Let fools put faith in tokens and in signs. I give you all to know that Siegfried was slain by robbers. He died not by Hagan's hand.'

Kriemhild answered, 'Verily he died by robbers—robbers which fawned and licked his bounteous hand, then basely stole away the life he spent on them. God and good men avenge me on such shameful robbers as Hagan and Gunther who spilled my darling's blood!'

Many a mass was sung. The minster bells tolled all the day. They brought a heavy coffin braced with iron bands and decked about with gold and silver plates; therein they laid Sir Siegfried. Little children came from every city street bringing offerings for the dead. But Kriemhild in her sorrow could not bear to give up his dear body to the ground; and first she begged three days wherein to sit and weep in solitude with the dead; and when at last they bore him to the grave, she came and fell upon her knees before her brethren and them which stood by, beseeching them so pitifully to break the coffin open and let her see her lord once more, that they could not choose but grant her prayer.

When the days of mourning were accomplished, and thirty thousand marks had been divided amongst the poor for the good of Siegfried's soul, Siegmund spake to his daughter-in-law to go back with him to Netherland, and she being willing, they all made ready to depart. But Kriemhild's mother, Uta, prayed her to remain; and her brother Giselher entreated her not to leave her own kith and kin to go home and live amongst strangers, for that he would certainly watch over and comfort her, and make amends for her affliction. Gernot also begged her to stay, saying, 'Believe me, I had neither part nor lot in Siegfried's death; neither knew I before that any bare him malice.' Kriemhild yielded to the pleadings of her brothers and remained. Siegmund tried hard to turn her mind by speaking of her child at home, but to no purpose, since Siegfried's body lay in Burgundy. Then finding he could not prevail on her, Siegmund, very loth, bade Kriemhild farewell, and gathering together his knights, departed out of Rhineland.

For three years and more Kriemhild went away from the palace, and dwelt apart with her maids in a house hard by the minster gate. Each morning and evening she betook herself to church, and was fain to linger there, or weep on Siegfried's tomb. Her sorrow fastened on her mind. Peace never came from prayer or chant or psalm; only a sorrow-weariness and listlessness of heart. The people, seeing her sweet face, white and grief-worn, pitied her, and those about were very tender for their pity's sake. Only Queen Brynhild cared nothing for Kriemhild's tears; wept never with her, comforted her not; but sat on high upon her throne and scoffed at her. All those three years and a half Kriemhild would never so much as set eyes on Gunther or on Hagan.

At last Hagan spake to King Gunther, 'Except you make the

peace with your sister Kriemhild, where is the profit of what we have done? Without it we shall never get the Nibelung treasure.' Gunther answered, 'It is idle talking. She will not see or speak to me. And if I tried to break in on her sorrow, she would but call me robber to my face again, and make as much ado at being ravished of her grief as when we robbed her of her love. I dare not go. If you are bolder, go yourself.' But having taken counsel together, they sent Gernot and Giselher; and these coming to Kriemhild said, 'Dear sister, life is too short to grieve so long; and sorrow for the dead availeth naught except it chasten us to tenderness. King Gunther longs to give you proof that he slew not Siegfried. Be reconciled to him.' She answered, 'Verily Gunther slew him not. Nay, brothers, it was I. I am to blame. I who betrayed him—not the poor cowards which thrust the spear into his back, ran from him when he was dying, shrank from him when he was dead. Hagan, not Gunther, struck the blow, but only since Gunther was the greater coward. If I should pardon Gunther it would be because my heart despised him yet more than Hagan, and most because I blame my folly worst of all.'

They pleaded long, until from weariness she said, 'Tell Gunther my tongue forgives him, but I never can forget.' Then brought they her to Gunther, and brother and sister were reconciled. Moreover Kriemhild greeted all the knights, save Hagan only which struck the blow; him she would not see, and sooth to say he slank away, knowing the blood-guiltiness that was upon his head.

And after this Kriemhild hindered them not from sending to the land of the Nibelungs for the treasure which Siegfried gave her for a morning-gift after her wedding. Eight thousand warriors went with Kriemhild and Giselher and Gernot to the mountain where Alberich the dwarf lurked always to mind the gold.

And Alberich said, 'Siegfried took the cloud-cloak from us, and the treasure was his to give to whomsoever he willed. I and the Nibelung men are his liege servants.' With that he took the keys of the treasure-house and delivered them up to Kriemhild.

Then they began to get the treasure out. It was so great that it took twelve huge waggons day and night four days in going to and fro betwixt the cavern and the beach to lade the ships therewith. It was so great that its price could not be reckoned. It was a heap of gold and chosen gems—a hoard so rich and big that if one had the mind to buy up the whole world, its price would be a mere handful which none would miss from out the

heap; and hidden amongst it lay the golden wishing-rod, which whoso could find should rule the earth and all therein.

They brought this mighty treasure away to Worms, and there crammed every tower and chamber in the castle with jewels and red gold, piled up like corn upon a granary floor. Kriemhild reeked little of it; how gladly would she have given it all to win her lord to life again! With open hand she dealt the treasure out to all which came, to rich and poor alike; until the world rang with the bounty of the widowed queen, and foreign knights from all lands flocked to Worms to share the gold which she showered forth as it had been dross.

But Hagan was afraid, and put Gunther on his guard. 'This will not do: a few more months and Kriemhild will have bought up all the warriors in the world and won them to her service. She must be stayed.'

Gunther answered, 'I cannot hinder her: the hoard is hers; scarce have I regained her favour as it is. I will not give her more offence, neither care I how she scatters her treasure.'

Hagan said, 'This is folly; if you care not for yourself, have some regard for Burgundy. If you restrain her not, I must: so lay the blame on me; she cannot hate me worse.'

Then Gunther went upon a journey, and while he was gone Hagan prevailed over Kriemhild's chamberlains which kept her treasure, and got the keys. When Kriemhild made complaint to her brothers Gernot and Giselher, they feigned to be very angry, and said that if Hagan had not been their kinsman it should certainly have cost him his life; and as she continually upbraided them, Gernot said to Hagan, 'Better this treasure were flung into the river than cause such a-do; for if it is spent, it will harm us, and if it is locked, there is no peace within the palace.' After that both the brothers took leave of their sister, saying they also must needs go on a journey; and so left her alone with Hagan. He got the treasure out of the castle and bore it away, and cast it into the Rhine at Lochheim at a place he knew of, whence he thought to recover it at a convenient season.

When the three brothers came back, they all said that they were very angry with Hagan, and they banished him from the palace for a time, and so made peace with Kriemhild. But she being very unhappy, after a while went away from her brothers to dwell with her mother Uta in her palace at Lorsch, hard by the abbey. Thither also she caused Siegfried's bones to be brought, and had them buried beside Lorsch minster, where they lie to this day.

III. THE VENGEANCE OF KRIEMHILD.

It befell after Kriemhild had been thirteen years a widow, that Helcke, wife of Etzel king of the Huns, died; and Etzel sent messengers with rich presents to ask Kriemhild in marriage. Chief of the messengers was the trusty margrave, Rudeger of Bechlaren. When Gunther knew their errand he was well inclined towards them; neither was he minded to heed the warning of Hagan, who bade him look well to it, for that Etzel was a powerful king, and Kriemhild as his queen might work them much mischief. Gunther said, 'The mightier the king the greater honour. The Huns live far away; I fear them not.' Giselher also rebuked Hagan, saying, 'You have cost my sister many a tear. Already have you robbed her of her mate and treasure; why hinder her from finding new?' Gernot said likewise, 'Fear nothing; we shall never go on Etzel's land; there will be peace in your time and in mine.' Hagan answered, 'Do as you will. I know that Kriemhild hateth you all, and chiefly me. Here in Burgundy she cannot work us harm, but whoso setteth her on high is a fool; he putteth a scourge into her hand and bareth his back to the smiter.' 'Peace, Hagan, she is our sister; we will make amends, though late, for thwarting all her life.' So spake Giselher. Hagan frowned, and as he turned away laughed scornfully and muttered, 'Fools!'

Margrave Rudeger came praying Kriemhild to bestow her love upon his master Etzel. Courteously she listened while he told of Etzel's might and royal state, of his riches, and how he ruled twelve kingdoms and a score and more of princedoms. She answered wearily, 'I have lost already more than woman ever won before. Of what avail your little heaps of gold to me that owned the Nibelung hoard? A crown, a kingdom, tempts me not. No king was ever yet so strong as Siegfried. I have been Siegfried's wife—be that your answer. All other kings are less than he.'

Rudeger said, 'Fair queen, the Huns are many; they are firm fast friends to all within their borders; strong to shelter, powerful to avenge a wrong.'

Then Kriemhild wakened from her listlessness. As one that talketh with herself she said, 'I have no friends; alone I muse and weep, or sing at mass within the minster the while I let them filch my power away. Lo, what a feeble thing am I become!

Hearken, Sir Rudeger; if I could count on friends—strong helpful friends—perchance I might be tempted to be queen again.'

He answered, 'Lady, count on me, upon my kinsmen and my vassals. We will be foremost in avenging you on any man who wrongs our master's queen.'

'But Etzel,' she said, 'is he not a heathen man?'

'Nay, lady, a good man as kings go; an upright man. He was converted once; but finding Christians much like heathen folk, he went back to his old faith. His people love him as a just and kindly man. As many Christian knights as heathen sit around his board. He heedeth rites but little, so he can live an honest life, and doubtless would be christened if you willed.'

Now both Kriemhild's mother and brethren urged her to the match, but each for a different reason. Queen Uta, since a great alliance was for the honour of their line; King Gunther, because the sight of her brought always to his mind his treachery: Gernot, because he wearied of her complaints; but Giselher, since he loved his sister well and sought her good.

So Kriemhild was easily persuaded to follow the bent of her own mind. A great company of her kinsfolk and the chiefs of Burgundy accompanied her as far as the Danube. There she took leave of her brothers with kisses and fair words, insomuch that they went away light-hearted, thinking that she had clean forgiven and forgotten all. Then with Eckewart, her faithful chamberlain, and her maidens, she followed margrave Rudeger. Of all the Nibelung riches she brought away but twelve chests of gold; yet when she lamented the smallness of her dowry, Rudeger said, 'If my lady had all dwarf Alberich's treasure back again, I would have left it all behind: it would not make her one whit dearer in my master's eyes.'

Forth rode King Etzel out of Hungary to meet his bride. With him were knights of well-nigh every land and tongue; Greek, Russian, Pole, Wallachian, Thuringian, Dane. At Tulna they met the queen, and she, being lifted from her palfrey, laid aside her veil and kissed the twelve noblest men, as Rudeger had taught her that the custom of the Huns was. Then Kriemhild greeted the king, who was greatly enamoured of her beauty and her royalness. They journeyed to Vienna, and there for seven seen days they kept the marriage-feast and made a tournament. The city could not hold the knights that flocked thither from every quarter of the earth; they encamped for miles about the country, so that the people said, 'Queen Kriemhild did not scatter the Nibelung gold for naught.'

After this the king and queen went home to Haimburg, the royal city of Hungary. In due time Kriemhild bare her lord a son; and she called his name Ortlieb, and had him baptised in Christian manner, for there was nothing that Etzel could withhold from her, since she was so dear to him. For long the people loved their queen, and Eckewart her chamberlain, by fair speeches and presents, made hosts of friends for her.

But Kriemhild continually brooded over her wrongs; and so one day she said to King Etzel, 'I pray thee send and bid my kinsfolk to a feast. I would not have this people think that I am an outcast without friends.' And the king appointed two noble minstrels, Werbel and Schwemmelein, to go upon the errand.

And being come to Burgundy, the messengers spake to King Gunther as Kriemhild had bade them. 'Much it grieveth our queen to be forsaken of her kindred all these years. It shameth her in the people's eyes, who, thinking that she hath no friends, esteem her less. Wherefore she doth intreat of her good brothers to come at midsummer to a feast in Hungary; and since the noble knight Sir Hagan knoweth well the road, she prayeth him to come also. We likewise bear our lady's service and good-will to the lady Uta and Queen Brynhild.' Then Gunther took counsel with his brothers and Hagan.

Hagan said, 'Let fools fall into an open trap. Remember all that we have done. Distrust these smooth-tongued messengers. You dare not go.'

Gunther answered, 'Right well know I by Kriemhild's kiss at parting that she hath forgiven us all, save you perchance.'

Moreover Gisheler said, 'Shall we, forsooth, be forced to shun our sister, all because Hagan's guilty heart maketh a coward of him! He says *we* dare not go. He means, *he* durst not go. Let Hagan stay at home and save his skin, but we will go up to the feast.'

Then answered Hagan, 'Despise my warning if you will, but wrong me not. I am no coward. I say that Kriemhild is our sharpest foe. And therefore I certainly will go with you; for it is not meet that a knight should leave his lords to face their enemies alone.'

King Gunther equipped ten thousand and threescore men to go with him, that the Huns might see the mightiness of the kinsmen of their queen. But there was many an ill-foreboding at their departure. Rumold, to whom Gunther committed the charge of the kingdom till his return, said, 'Alas, master that you ride forth to this feast.' And the old Queen Uta dreamed that every bird throughout the land fell dead.

Now after twelve days' journey, Hagan brought them out upon a place against the Danube side where the swift river was swollen so deep and broad that they could in nowise wade across, neither was there any boat to ferry them over. And as Hagan went along the river bank by himself to look for a place where it might be forded, he came upon two swan-maidens who had doffed their swan-dresses to bathe. Hagan stole their dresses and made off; but one of the maidens called after him, 'Give us back our swan-raiment and we will tell what shall befall thee, and of the very great renown and profit that shall come to thee and to the host which journeys into Hungary.' So, being pleased with their speech, he gave back their dresses. Then the other laughed and said, 'My sister did but lie to thee to get our raiment back. Now hear truth, and heed it if thou wilt. Hagan, son of Aldrian, thou shalt die in Etzel's land, and every man of the host shall perish there save the king's chaplain; he only shall go back to Rhineland!'

Hagan answered, 'In vain you lie and cheat, for I will prove you false this very day.' So he left them, and presently espying a ferryman, beckoned him to come and put him across the river. When the ferryman came to land and saw a stranger, he would not take him into the boat; but Hagan drew his sword and slew the boatman and carried off the ferry-boat. Then Hagan ferried over all the host in companies. And when only the king's chaplain was left on the other bank, he put the boat across again in the dusk of the evening to fetch him; and as soon as he had rowed into the midst of the river, Hagan took the chaplain by the waist and flung him in the water, saying, 'There, you lying women; he shall never more see Rhineland!' The chaplain was a strong swimmer and struck out lustily for shore; but Hagan followed in the boat and beat his head down with the oar; yet for all this he could not drown him. The chaplain dived; God brought him safely to the further side; there being landed he hied him back to Rhineland with all speed.

Seeing the chaplain was escaped, Hagan began to despond, and having rowed ashore he set about breaking the boat in pieces; for he thought, if we are to return no more of what avail will it be to us? But when Dankwart asked him what he did, he answered, 'Whatever ill betide us on this evil journey, no coward shall slink home again.' With that he cast the pieces in the river.

Now as they journeyed through Bavaria, Gelfrat the stout margrave came out with seven hundred knights and fell upon

Hagan and Dankwart as they marched apart from the host with only a little band of men—for he sought to take vengeance for his ferryman. Howbeit Dankwart overcame Gelfrat and slew him, and his knights, being worsted in the battle, fled.

On the borders of Hungary they came upon Sir Eckewart, Kriemhild's liegeman, who lay sleeping by the wayside. Hagan sprang on him and took his sword away, not knowing who he was; but when Sir Eckewart awaked and Hagan knew him, he gave back his sword and offered him, beside, many rings of gold to be his friend. Eckewart said, 'I will not have your gifts. The blood of Siegfried is upon your hands. Take heed, for Siegfried's slayer will find no friends amongst the Huns.' Hagan answered, 'If we lack friends we yet can guard ourselves from enemies; but what we most lack now is shelter, and a lodging for the night; we would not sleep upon the ground in this bleak land as thou, it seems, art wont to do.'

Now Sir Rudeger dwelt in a fair house at Bechlaren without the borders of Hungary. Thither Sir Eckewart led them all, and Rudeger and his wife Gotlind gave hearty welcome to the lords of Burgundy, and lodged and feasted them and all their men sumptuously for many days. And when they had rested and must needs go forward, Sir Rudeger gave gifts to everyone of that which each most set his mind upon. He withheld not his fair young daughter from Giselher, but gave her to him to be his bride, and they were betrothed after the manner of the time. They stood within a ring of youths and maidens, in whose sight they pledged their troth and kissed each other. To Gernot he gave a sword; to Gunther a mail-coat of proof. But Hagan asked a gift that brought tears to fair Gotlind's eyes. He would take nothing but a shield that was laid by, kept always covered with a broidered veil of samite; it was decked with stones most precious, worth a thousand marks and more; yet not for that did Gotelind treasure it—her only son had borne it in the battle where he fell; on it they brought his body home. But Hagan asked and had it. He knew it was a precious thing, but, peradventure, knew not all it cost to give. Yet would not Rudeger keep back anything that was in his house from his guests.

Then Rudeger brought the lords of Burgundy to Etzel's palace, and Queen Kriemhild came down to meet them at the castle gate. Gunther, and Gernot, and Hagan she passed by, but took her brother Giselher by the hand and kissed him.

Then spake Hagan, 'Is this a seemly welcome, passing kings and champions by to greet the youngest and least famous?'

Kriemhild said, 'Tell me; what have you brought me for a present out of Rhineland, to make you welcome in my sight?'

He answered, 'Lady we have no presents in our land befitting the regard of such a mighty queen.'

Then said Kriemhild, 'Have you forgot so soon the Nibelung treasure? When a thief would make amends, at least he giveth back the thing he stole. Have you no present out of that great hoard to bring to me from whom you robbed it all?'

Wrathfully he answered, 'The devil a present I bring. The hoard lies at the bottom of the Rhine. It is enough for him that visits foes to bring his arms and armour.'

Then Kriemhild commanded them to lay their weapons down before they passed into the hall. And when they would not, the queen cried fiercely, 'Some one has warned these men. My brothers even doubt me. If I could find who put them on their guard he certainly should die.'

Then outspake bold Sir Dietrich, one of the trustiest knights about her court: 'Many have warned them, lady; I for one. God grant there be no need of warning, for treachery to a guest were a foul sin. But since thou dost welcome them thus, I bid them still take heed, and keep their weapons by them. Now punish me as thou hast said.'

But Kriemhild blushed red with shame: she feared Sir Dietrich: and so the knights passed armed into the hall. And Gunther and Dietrich made a league of friendship between them.

King Etzel from his throne espied the big broad-chested Hagan, his black hair dashed with grey, and asked Kriemhild concerning him.

She told him, 'That is Hagan, son of Aldrian of Tronje,—a strong champion, but cruel of hand and coward of heart.'

'Nay,' the king said, 'thou art wrong, fair Kriemhild. If he be Aldrian's son, I cannot but befriend him for his father's sake. Well knew I Aldrian; I dubbed him knight, and he was ever a true comrade unto me. So he is Aldrian's son!' Then he bade Hagan come near, and began to speak with him about his father; and as they talked the old king's heart waxed young again to hear of days gone by.

The next day Hagan and Volker crossed the courtyard and went and sat alone upon a bench within a chamber hard by a hall of Kriemhild's.

About Kriemhild in her hall were threescore Hunnish knights. Straightway she brake out a-weeping; and when they asked what troubled her she said, 'I have no peace while Hagan lives. O

friends, these many years have I bewailed my helplessness because I could not smite the man that slew my lord. Yonder he is, within the chamber; only one man with him.' They answered with one accord, 'Speak but the word and Hagan dies.' She said, 'Follow me to the chamber-door. Wait you without the door while I go in and talk with him. And when you hear from his own mouth what he hath done, tarry no longer but rush in and fall on him.'

Howbeit one listened at the queen's door and ran and told Hagan what threatened him. And Hagan said to Volker, 'Friend, wilt thou stand by me?'—'Aye, to death,' he answered. 'Then we will try the mettle of these Hunnish men.'

Presently came Kriemhild to the door. Volker asked his comrade, 'Shall we rise and greet the Queen?'—'Nay,' answered Hagan; 'rise not from off the bench, move not a hair, lest those without should think that we flinch. I care not for her wrath. Sit still and speak no word.'

Kriemhild came in, her crown upon her head, and looked for them to rise. They stirred not, but gazed at her; she at them. Then Hagan took his eyes from off the queen, and having loosed the great sword from his side, he laid it across his knees, and turned it slowly about as though he needed to examine it. The handle of the sword was gold; a precious jasper glittered in the pommel; the scabbard was trimmed with red.

Kriemhild scarce could endure the torment of the sight. How well she knew that sword—her husband's good sword Balmung—and in Hagan's hands!

She drew herself up straight, her cheeks aflame, and anger flashing from her eyes; 'How dare you, murderer, wear my Siegfried's sword?'

He toyed with the blade as though he heard her not.

'Quick, answer me. How dare you in your bloody hand bear what his honest fingers held?'

Hagan lifted his eyes again and looked at her. Cold and unmoved he said, 'Because I slew your husband, and being his slayer took the spoil. If those men of yours without think that they can take it from me, let them in.' Again he fell to toying with the blade and mused aloud, 'A pretty sword. How keen of edge! The blade as heavy as an axe. A trusty sword, fair queen.'

She cried aloud, 'You hear? He owns the shedding of my husband's blood! Come in and rid me of this murderer!'

But the men tarried without, each looking that his fellow

should first go in. They feared the two stern champions; they had heard of Balmung, which Siegfried made renowned throughout all lands, and durst not enter. One by one they slank away and scattered themselves about the castle quickly lest Hagan should find out which they were that sought his life and should take vengeance on them.

Then was Kriemhild sore vexed, and went away to her chamber to bewail herself.

After this, Hagan had little fear by day, because Kriemhild durst not do anything openly for fear of the king, and besides that, many of her best champions would not have suffered treason to be done against a guest. Yet, because of their pride and courage, there was not found one of all the men of Burgundy that would go and tell the king what Kriemhild plotted. Nevertheless, at night Hagan and Volker put their armour on and kept watch at the gateway of the house where Gunther and the Burgundians slept. One midnight there stole up a band of Hunnish men whom Kriemhild charged, 'Strike no man but Hagan only;' but seeing the man whom they wanted armed and watching in his mail-coat, they would not assail him, for they feared to wake the rest. When they went to church the men of Burgundy went with their armour on, their swords girt at their sides; they sat together in a company, and all the while the mass was singing they scowled at the Huns not knowing which of them were foes, and the Huns scowled back on them.

Then being baulked in every plan to put Hagan alone to death, the queen's longing to be recompensed on him grew so fierce that she recked not though all should perish so he died. And when the tournament came on she pondered, 'If we could only tempt a Rhinelander to slay a knight of ours, no need then to bespeak our people's hate for them; the tourney would end in battle and I should be avenged.'

Many a knight she sent into the tilt-yard to vex the Burgundians both with words and blows. Moodily Queen Kriemhild sat beside her lord and watched how Gunther's folk bare down the Huns and cleared the lists without a quarrel or mishap. The tilt was over, so thought Gunther's men, and they were masters of the lists, when lo there came riding forth a Hunnish knight in dainty dress to show his finery before the dames. 'See yonder ladies' darling!' said Volker to his fellows, 'a tap of a spear would fling him. But he shall not come on our ground until the joust is over. I will ride at him. If he choose to flee, why let him; if he stand, Heaven help his gilt and gew-gaws.' So saying he pricked his

steed and set his lance in rest. The Hun fled not, but spurred t meet him. Volker's spear passed through his body and bore hi off the saddle, dead. Then all the Huns called out for arms, an setting themselves in array against the Rhinelanders, would hav straightway given them battle, only that Etzel rode in front an snatched the sword from out the hand of the first man who dre his weapon, crying, 'Back, you brawlers! The man was slain b misadventure. I saw the blow. Volker's horse stumbled.' S he patched up a peace betwixt the jealous hosts, and led them t the banquet table.

When they had feasted together, King Etzel bethought hi how to bind the two peoples into friendship; and he sent an fetched his little son Ortlieb, that Kriemhild bare him. Then h set the boy in the midst of Kriemhild's kinsmen, saying, 'Behol my son who will sit upon my throne. I will put him in you hands, and you shall take him back with you to Rhineland an bring him up; for I wish nothing better than that he should gro bold and fearless like the men of Burgundy. When he is becom a man and rules this land he will repay your care, and be you strong ally.' But Hagan, grown surly in his cups, jeered at th boy and said, 'Your weakly youngster has not got the making o a man in him. We none of us shall trouble Ortlieb's court, bu we may see his grave.' Grieved was the king to hear this bitte speech, and wrathful waxed the Huns. Yet Etzel kept the back and quieted the tumult because of his honour and his roya word.

But Etzel's peacemaking was vain; for Kriemhild would no rest till she had set the people by the ears. She bribed Si Blödel with money, land, and castles to go at all hazards and sti up a deadly strife with any one of Gunther's chiefs.

Blödel gathered together a thousand Huns and led them to th hall where Dankwart and his comrades sat at meat. Hagan wa not there; and so he came to Dankwart, who asked what hi errand was with such a company. He said, 'A life for Kriemhil from her lord's foul murderers,' and smote him in the face Dankwart upstarted from the table. 'She shall have a life,' h said; then swung his heavy sword and struck the head off Blödel body. Seeing their master dead, the Huns in fury ran on Gunther men and put numbers of them to the sword. Many had n weapons, having laid them aside as they sat at meat; these tor up seats and benches, snatched up the heavy settles in their hands and fought like madmen. The meats lay trampled under foo among the corpses; the floor ran blood mingled with spilt mea

which splashed them as they fought. But the Huns were driven out and left five hundred of their dead within the hall. Dankwart and his men, all bloody, pursued them out of doors and struck them down as they fled. Before King Etzel knew, many thousand Huns had armed themselves to avenge their fellows. These came up and drave back Dankwart and his men into the house again and swarmed thick about it for a stone-cast every way. They fought till Dankwart only and twelve comrades were left alive: the hall was heaped up with nine thousand dead. Then Dankwart was fain to beg a boon of his foemen. 'Give us air, he cried; 'there is no more room within for dead or living; we stifle with the blood and heat. Let us out; few though we be, we do not grudge to die; but let us breathe the air again and die in fight like warriors.' The Huns of their courtesy stood from the door and let them out. Then fought they fiercer than before, the twelve against an army, till Dankwart looked for his comrades and he alone was left. Then set he to work to cut a road through all that host. In both hands he gripped his heavy sword; to right and left he swung it swift as lightning; the Huns went down on either side like barley bowing to the sickle. So he made a way and came out safe and ran, the Huns all following, till he gained the palace. He bounded up the staircase, overturning the cup-bearers and men bearing dishes from King Etzel's table, and came reeking with blood to where Hagan and Gunther and their comrades sat over the wine-cup. He told his tale in a breath: a score of Rhineland men ran down with him to keep the door.

The child Ortlieb was prattling at the table. Hagan said, 'We will pledge ourselves once more together, Burgundian and Hun; and I will pour you royal wine.' He caught the child and smote it in the neck with his sword: the head rolled into Kriemhild's lap. Then began a great and terrible slaughter. Hagan smote off the hand of Werbel the minstrel wherewith he played the viol, saying, 'Take that for bearing the message into Burgundy.' Then Rhinelander and Hun fought for dear life, till corpses piled the floor.

Sir Dietrich was there in the hall with many of his men, but held himself aloof. He would not fight against Gunther's knights, because of the league which he had made with him, neither would he fight against King Etzel, being his liegeman. Kriemhild crept trembling to him, saying, 'Save me from Hagan, good Dietrich, for he thirsts to have my blood.' He said, 'I will do all that a man may.'

Then Sir Dietrich leaped upon a table and lifting his voice

above all the din of swords, called on Gunther. Gunther came: 'What would you? Have we harmed a man of yours, good friend? Be sure it was mishap, and we will make amends. But hinder me not, for we are hard bestead.' He answered, 'Nay, dear comrade. All my men are safe. But since we fight not, give me leave to pass out, me and mine. This bloody banquet surfeits us.' Gunther said, 'Go, take with you whom you will, except my mortal foeman.' And they slacked the fight for a little, that Dietrich and his men might pass in safety. Then Sir Dietrich took the queen beneath his arm, and sheltered King Etzel on his other side; five hundred of his champions closed about him. Unmolested they passed down the stairs and out through the door.

The noise of battle in the palace was heard all day; but towards nightfall it slacked, for Gunther and his men were masters of the hall, and every Hun therein was slain. From the windows and down the staircase they threw the dead in heaps; seven thousand bodies and more.

Day after day the multitude of Huns that surrounded them brake down the door and fought their way into the hall; yet came they not out any more, save through the windows, when Gunther's men tumbled their bodies out upon the corpse-heap.

Then Kriemhild sent to her brothers, saying, 'Give Hagan up to me, and I will make peace and answer for your lives. You cannot keep him from me long. Why perish with him? You are my brethren.' But they sent answer back, 'We will not give our brave comrade up. We will have grace for all or none.'

Then the queen commanded to make fast the door, and burn down the hall. The Huns kindled it on all sides; a fresh wind rose and wrapped the house in fire. Loud roared the flames; billows of smoke all flecked with fire went rolling up to the sky.

The heat was terrible; but Hagan said, 'There is blood enough within to quench the burning timbers as they drop. Stand close against the walls and get what air there is. The roof is vaulted and will not fall; the walls are stone. If we can only bear the heat and tread the fire-flakes out, we may escape.'

The smoke grew stifling hot, and parched their tongues so that they hung from their mouths with drought. They knew not what to do, till they saw one stoop down to a corpse yet warm and draw the blood. Then drank they all the self-same draught, and the blood new strung their sinews, quenched their thirst, and made them fierce.

So it befell that in the morning when the Huns went to the

hall to seek the ashes of their enemies, they found them yet alive, and guarding the smoking doorway sword in hand. Twelve hundred men, urged forward by the queen, stormed a passage in; but Gunther's men drave out some of them, and slew the rest and ramparted the doorway with their bodies.

When Kriemhild found it vain for the Huns to contend against her kinsmen, she went with King Etzel to Rudeger and besought his help. He said, 'How can I? They have eaten of my bread and pledged me in the wine-cup. My daughter is betrothed to Giselher. I brought them hither. I have no cause of strife with one of them. I pray thee ask me not.' Then she reminded him of his pledge: 'Didst thou not promise to be first to avenge me on a wronger? I hold thee to thy word.' Then Rudeger was heart-sorry, and said to the king, 'Take back, I pray, all the lands and castles I hold of thee, and let me go away and wander over the earth without purse or scrip; but constrain me not to do this thing.' Then both king and queen fell down at his feet, and clasped his knees and intreated him very sore, till he said, 'God help me, for I put my soul in jeopardy. No man will ever trust Rudeger more; nor take him for a friend. For my oath's sake I will go, but for my name's sake God grant that I come not back alive.'

Giselher looked out and saw Rudeger riding at the head of five hundred knights, and he said to his brothers, 'Rejoice, for here cometh an unlooked-for succour from my father-in-law.' When Rudeger was come before the hall he set his shield at his feet, and greeted the men of Burgundy but defied them not. He said, 'It is not of my will I join this fray. I have no choice. Stand well on your defence, for I am become your foe.'

Then said Gunther, 'God forbid that you should turn against us. You cannot fight with us, nor we with you, for nothing can make us aught but friends.' Gernot said likewise, 'Your gifts are in our hands; God's blessing on you for your kindness! The sword you gave has never failed me through this fight. But how could I strike the giver with his gift?' Moreover Giselher prayed him, 'If thou canst not help us, at least turn back. Thou couldest not smite me, and widow thy daughter ere she be a bride.'

Rudeger was deeply moved, but he answered, 'I have no choice; my word is passed. Quit you right manfully, and do not fear to strike for friendship's sake. Think only of me as a foe. You cannot hate me more than I hate myself. But I will not go back.'

Hagan said, 'I thank thee for the shield which Gotlind gave me. It has warded many a blow, though now being full of rifts and well-nigh hewn in twain, it is scarce fit for a man to bear in fight.'

Then Rudeger took up his own shield which lay at his feet and gave it to Hagan, saying, 'Wield it well, and mayest thou bear it safe to Burgundy.'

Even the stern Hagan was melted at the gift. He said, 'Good friend, my hand shall never touch thee in the fray.'

No more they parleyed. Margrave Rudeger drew his sword and led his knights forward. Gunther and his brothers kept the gate, but stood aside and let him pass; in part, since they feared to strike the noble Rudeger, and partly because they thought to take his life more surely in the hall if his mind was bent to be their enemy.

Right faithfully Sir Rudeger behaved himself that day. He fought as a knight well used to battle, and quickly strewed the hall with dead. He would not stay his hand, nor parley with any man. Terrible waxed the slaughter, and the brothers were hard put to it for their lives. Then Gernot made Rudeger turn about and fight with him: for he said, 'You will not leave us here a single man alive.' Fiercely they leaped upon each other, greedy of fame. Many a deadly stroke they warded, watching each other's wary eyes. Then Rudeger's blade came crashing down through Gernot's helmet, and cut him to the brain. With his last strength Gernot lifted on high the sword which Rudeger had given him and slew the giver therewith, cleaving him through shield and mail-coat down the shoulder to the heart. Together they dropped dead. After that Gunther and his men spared none in their fury. Many an unwounded knight was trampled down in the press and stifled among the dead. At eventide a little band of the Burgundians were left alive but well-nigh fainting with the heavy strife. Their enemies were slain; they were masters of the hall again. For weariness they laid them down upon the dead to rest; but as they espied the bodies of Rudeger and Gernot they wept.

Kriemhild listened without the hall till the din and clamour ceased. But Rudeger returned not nor his men. Then bitterly she cried, 'O woe is me, to trust half-hearted friends! If Rudeger had been steadfast all would have been well: but he has made some treaty with them, and betrayed me. He has lied.'

Volker heard her, and looked out from the hall window and spake to the queen: 'If anything were a-wanting to reveal the

ackness of your heart, it were your deeming Rudeger could be acherous. Lady, he died for you.' And he lifted Rudeger's dy at the window that the queen might see.

Kriemhild saw, and wailed and sobbed in tearless grief. The argrave dead in vain! Her aching eyelids were too hot to eep.

But King Etzel did nothing but moan, saying, 'Would that I d a man to slay this traitor Hagan, and leave the land in uietness!'

Sir Dietrich heard how Rudeger and his men were slain, nd he said, 'This is a foul deed of the Burgundians. They ever had so fast a friend as Rudeger. His life at least they ight have spared and made him prisoner. I never loved a an so well as I loved Rudeger. If they have slain him they hall answer for it.' Then gathered he his men, and there came ith him old Hildebrand and Wolfhart, Helfrich and Helmnot, Volfwine and Wolfbrand, and a great company of warriors. nd they came to the hall and demanded to know the truth of he matter. Hagan told them: 'Alas, the tale is all too true. Ve grieve for Rudeger as much as you can. We bore him no nmity nor he us, but he fought us for his oath's sake to the ueen. He wrought us more mischief than an enemy. He ould not yield nor parley. To right and left he slew our men. What could we do?' Wolfhart said, ''Tis vain to make excuse or such a crime. I could not sorrow more for my own father han for Rudeger. Where is the man that loved him not? And ou, his friends and mine, have slain him. Cursed be your riendship!'

Then Hildebrand demanded that they should give up the ody of Rudeger to them for burial. But Hagan would not. Nay,' said he, 'the margrave's body is ours. He lived and ied our friend; and none can pay him equal honour at his urial. Of dire misfortune, not of malice, we smote him. We onour and love him. We mourn most for him. If you would ave his body, come and take it if you can, and if you dare.'

Wrathful at this defiance, the knights of Dietrich thronged on he men that kept the gate: they bore them down and forced a way upstairs into the hall. The dwindled band of Burgundians ought with a lion-like courage and sold their lives full dear. But one by one their champions dropped. Volker was slain by Hildebrand; Helfrich struck Dankwart down; Wolfhart took young Giselher's life. Not unavenged they fell. So fiercely fought that little band that when the sun began to sink the

numbers on either side were at last grown equal. Only four were left alive—Gunther and Hagan; Dietrich and Hildebrand.

'You are faint and weary, both of you,' said Dietrich; 'no renown could we win by conflict. Wherefore yield yourselves up, and I will answer for your lives and see you safely back to Burgundy.'

'That were a shameful thing,' answered Hagan, 'for two to yield to two. Never since we have been in Hungary have we fought such easy odds. If you fear, yield yourselves, or get fresh champions. We fear not.' So they fell to; Hagan with Dietrich, Gunther with Hildebrand.

Hagan drove Dietrich through the hall and down the stairs into the open plain; there Hagan's strength failed him, and Dietrich dealt him a sword-wound deep and long that fetched him swooning to his knees. Then warily he approached the fainting man, sprang on him, locked his body in his arms, and bound him with a heavy cord. In like manner Hildebrand served Gunther, for he stunned the wearied king with a mighty blow upon the helm and bound him fast.

Dietrich brought the tired captives in their bonds to Kriemhild. The queen laughed merrily and loud, and said, 'Thanks, good Sir Dietrich.' Then she spake softly to Gunther, saying, 'Welcome, my brother. I give you hearty welcome. And Hagan—he is welcome too.' But there was hunger in her hot red eyes. So Sir Dietrich being beguiled by the gentleness of her speech, and heeding not the strangeness of her way, left both the captives in the queen's charge, commending them to her good care; and took his leave.

But no sooner was Sir Dietrich gone than the Queen commanded her servants to lock the prisoners in two dungeons apart the one from the other.

Kriemhild went down to Hagan in his prison-house, and looked him in the face with a long wistful stare, but spake not. Then she asked fiercely, 'Where is my gold? My bright red gold? Give back my gold and I will set you free.'

He looked at her, bewildered at the hunger of her eyes, but answered, 'The gold? I took an oath to tell no living soul where it was hid so long as one of my lords was alive. Two of them are dead, but Gunther lives yet.'

Then she went away saying within herself, 'Gunther keeps me from my gold. How dares he!' And she spake to her servants, 'Quick go to Gunther's dungeon. Bring me his head.'

They brought the ghastly thing all bleeding to her. She took

it by the hair and went to Hagan. She spake fast and eagerly—'See! he is dead! Not one of them is left alive. Gunther is dead and Gernot and Giselher. Naught hinders. Tell me where you hid my gold, my blood-red gold?'

He answered, 'None knows now but God and I. And I will never tell!'

Against her bosom she clutched a sword with a golden handle. A jasper glittered in the pommel; the scabbard was trimmed with red. She flashed it forth; in both hands lifted up her husband's blade on high and smote off Hagan's head at a blow.

King Etzel sorrowed for Hagan. He bent his grey head upon his hands and leaned his elbows on his tottering knees. He mouthed and whined, 'Alas for Hagan! Well-a-day! To think the noblest knight that ever wielded sword should die by a woman's hand at last! I need must weep for him.'

But Hildebrand ran down into the dungeon; saw Kriemhild gloating like a fiend over the headless corpse; and half in fury, half in pity, drew his sword and struck the mad woman dead.

In the great mead-hall they served the feast; the savoury meat was set; the cup out-poured. Alone sat old King Etzel and Sir Dietrich at the board and wept. They drank not of the mead-horn; their meat was sorrow; tears had they for drink. So Pain dogs Pleasure's steps. Ended was the feast.

Walter of Aquitaine.

I. THE BETROTHAL OF WALTER AND HILDEGUND.

From the Eastern lands far away the host of the Huns swept on like a whirlwind, and the hearts of all men failed for fear, lest on them might fall the sword of Etzel the Scourge of God. Onward he went to the fair city of Worms, where King Gibich ruled his Niflungs in the vine-clothed land of the Rhine: but there was none who dared to lift hand against him, and the Niflung King was glad to buy peace of Etzel with gold and blood, for the Hun must have hostages for the good faith of him who sent the treasure. So the young Hagan was sent to Etzel, for Gibich was loth to send his son Gunther, who was yet a babe lying on his mother's breast; and straightway Etzel hastened away from Worms to spread havoc through the rich lands of Herrich the Burgundian King. From the high tower of Chalon the warder saw the clouds of dust thickening in the far distance, and he hastened to the king with the tidings. 'The hosts of the Huns are rolling hither,' he said, 'like the white-crested billows on the sea.' But the tidings of the craven pact which Gibich had made came even more swiftly than the armies of Etzel, and King Herrich knew that he too must buy peace from the men with whom his Burgundians dared not fight. So he sent messengers who went in the guise of conquered men without their arms, and told their errand to the Hunnish king. 'Thy master is no fool,' said Etzel to the bode, 'since he knows that fat peace is better than lean war. I too love a good bargain, and I have a sword. So let your king come to me.' But Etzel would not be contented with gold only, and King Herrich was forced to send his own child Hildegund, the fairest maiden in all the land.

Further yet to the West swept the Huns of Etzel till they came to the lands of the Basques where Alphar the father of

Walter was the king: and Alphar knew straightway that the covenant which he had made with Herrich had been made in vain; for it had been sworn between them that when the youth of Hildegund and Walter should be ripe, they should wed together, and the land of Burgundy and Spain should be one realm. 'The Niflungs and the hosts of Herrich stood not before Etzel,' he said, 'and I too must yield up my treasures and my son.' Glad at heart was the King of the Huns as he feasted his eyes on the treasure: and when he departed homewards to hide it in a strong cairn, Walter the son of Alphar went with him.

But yet more glad was Etzel, when, as he came once more under his own roof, he looked at the weapon which had smitten down his foes. 'Rest thee, my sword, and be still,' he said; 'thou hast had thy fill of blood. I too will rest, and the sounds of song and revelry shall be heard throughout my halls, until the whole land shall ring with the glory of my feasting.' So rested Etzel from the toil of strife, and the hostages had kindly treatment at his hand. By his side grew up Walter and Hagen, getting all knightly learning and craft, while Hildegund abode in the chambers of Helche the queen, who trained her in housewifely arts and made her the mistress and guardian of all her treasures. Meanwhile King Gibich had died at Worms in the land of the Franks, and Gunther his son, now that he was king in his father's place, would not keep the shameful pact with the Huns, and from that day forth sent no more tribute to Etzel. No sooner were the tidings brought to Hagen than he fled away, nor stayed anywhere to rest until he reached his home: but Walter was carrying on war for Etzel when the news came, and from this strife too, as from all others, he came back conqueror.

Full of fear was the heart of Queen Helche, when she knew that Hagen had fled, and she hastened to speak with her lord. 'The props of our sway are tottering,' she said; 'Hagen is gone, and if we take not good heed, Walter will follow in his steps. Speak then cunningly to him and say, "Never was warrior dearer to me than thou art, and well I know that thou hast not spared thy strength or thy blood in serving me. But Etzel requites not his friends with mere words: and it is time that I should show in deed how much I love thee. Look round and seek throughout the land for a bride, and I will give her a dowry such as no king has ever bestowed on his daughter." Tell him this, and it may be he will remain true to us.' The words of Helche seemed good to Etzel, and he spoke, as she

bade him, to Walter. But Walter had long since set it in his heart to break the yoke from off his neck. So, having thought within himself for a while, he thanked Etzel for his proffered bounty, but a wife he said that he could not take. 'If I choose a bride, I shall be tempted to stay at home, wasting my days in pleasant ease, and the thought of war will become hateful to me. Bid me do anything else, and whether it be at morningtide or in the evening, I am ready to do it, and to do it with the more gladness that I have neither wife nor children for whom I need to spare my blood.' Thus he besought the king to press him no more, and Etzel believed his words.

But now there came to Walter by a sure hand the tidings that the Franks of King Gunther had taken heart, and that the hosts of the Niflungs were making ready to march against the Huns and King Etzel with bow and shield and spear. The news filled Walter's heart with a fierce joy, and with the choicest of the warriors by his side he set the bands of the Huns in array for a mimic battle. Loud and long rose the war-cries, and oak and ashen lances clashed in grim play together, while the glitter of the spears was like the lightning's flash, or the quivering of snow-flakes driven before the storm. But when spears and arrows were all spent, the heat of the strife was so kindled in their hearts, that with drawn swords they rushed wildly against each other, and soon many a horse and many a warrior lay dead upon the ground. High above all rose the sword of Walter, and the bravest of the warriors shrank away from his stroke, till, at last, he drew from his side a golden horn, and praising his men for their prowess, threw an oak wreath round his head, and amid banner-bearers and warriors hastened in triumph to the castle of King Etzel, where many a squire came forth to hold his horse. 'How went it in the battle, lord Walter?' they asked; but little said he to them, for he was weary, and he went on quickly to the great hall, where he found the maiden Hildegund alone, and greeted her with the kiss of honour. 'Give me a cup of wine,' he said, 'that I die not of thirst;' and Hildegund gave him a golden goblet of sparkling wine, which he drained off at a draught. Then as he gave back the beaker, his eyes rested lovingly on the maiden, and as she looked timidly and blushing towards him, he took her by the hand and said, 'Long have we shared the same lot, and lived as hostages in the land of strangers and foes; long have we been far from each other, even when we were near; and long have we forgotten the bond that is between us, and the covenant of our fathers. Why hide it longer from ourselves? Let us call their oath to mind.'

But Hildegund feared that Walter was but jesting, and she sat silent awhile till she had put her thoughts in order. Then she said, 'Thy voice has a sweet sound, if thy words be true. But art thou not mocking me, Walter? Thou canst make choice from all the maidens of the land, and Etzel himself has pledged thee his word that whosoever she be, the maiden whom thou choosest shall be thine. How canst thou, who mightest have a king's daughter, think save in jest on the poor maiden Hildegund?' 'Away with these dreams,' said Walter; 'my word is as true as gold. Only look gently upon me, and tell me that thou wilt keep my trust, and I will tell thee all the secrets of my heart.' Then Hildegund sank sobbing on his breast, as she said, 'My greatest joy on earth is to do thee service, and to have thy thanks is my highest reward.' And Walter answered, 'Our exile makes me sick at heart, and in bitter grief my thoughts wander away to the Fatherland. Long have I yearned to flee away, like Hagen: but I could not go for very shame that Hildegund should remain behind me alone.' Then from the depths of Hildegund's heart came the words, 'To follow thee, my lord, in need and peril is the one yearning of my soul: and right gladly will I go to live with thee at home or to die.' 'Listen then to me,' whispered Walter in her ear, 'and give good heed to my words. The treasures of Etzel and Helche are in thy keeping. Take from that treasure the triply-woven coat of mail, and the helmet which thou knowest for its cunning workmanship. Take also two chests and fill them with jewels of gold till thou canst not lift either to thy breast; and be ready with all that we need for the journey, when the sun shall have sunk seven times in the west. Then will I bid the Huns to a feast, in which the hall shall swim with wine; but though men and maidens drain the flashing goblets, drink thou but sparingly, and when the women rise up from the banquet, make haste and do that which I bid thee. While the men are slaves to wine, we will speed away at eventide to the land of our fathers.'

So passed the seven days, and Walter made high festival for King Etzel and Queen Helche and all the chieftains of the Huns. Brightly flashed the wine in gold and crystal goblets; but the men yet tarried at the banquet board, when the women had gone to Helche's chamber and there let their tongues run free. Then from the nail Walter took down the great horn, and kneeling before the throne of Etzel he said: 'O peerless in war and battle, show us that thou art peerless also in quaffing the blood-red wine.' Taking the horn from his hand, as Walter's drinking

song echoed through the hall, the king drained the vessel at a single draught, and after him the horn and the song went round to all the guests. There was hurrying to and fro of busy feet as the menials passed each other, some bringing in the foaming beakers, others going out with empty goblets. Shame was it for the man who should lag in the race; so all did their best, and the wine did its best also. Loud grew the songs and shouts of the wassailers and the clatter of the wine-cups, till all lay like the dead on a battle-field, and Sleep came down with heavy wings to seize the prey stretched out before him.

Then hurrying from the hall, Walter bade Hildegund hasten to fetch the treasures, while from the stable he brought forth his mighty warhorse Lion. On either side of the saddle he hung one of the chests which the maiden had filled with golden jewels; and clad from head to heel in his armour, went forth with the maiden from the court which he should see again never more.

II. THE BATTLE FOR THE GOLDEN HOARD.

ALL night Walter and Hildegund hastened on, till the dawn light flushed the sky; and then, turning aside from the road, they plunged into the woods, lest haply Etzel's men might espy them. But so full of fear was the maiden's heart, that her limbs trembled if the wind moaned through the branches, or if the cry of a beast was echoed through the forest.

Meanwhile, all was still in the halls of Etzel, until when many an hour had gone by in heavy slumber the chiefs arose and went to seek Walter, that they might thank him for the feast with which he had gladdened their hearts. Last of all came Etzel, holding his aching head in his hands, and half wishing that the same pain had fallen also to the lot of Walter: and, yet more, when the warriors told him that nowhere could they find their host, Etzel thought that in some hidden corner he must be sleeping off the fumes of the wine. But Helch the queen knew that Hildegund had fled, when she came not to do her wonted duty, and all the house was filled with the sound of her weeping. 'Cursed be the banquet of yestereve which has cost two kingdoms, and has robbed us at one stroke of the best of our treasures. As I foreboded, so has it all come to pass. Our hoard is gone, and with it are gone Craft and Purity, for Walter, the sun of our

land, has fled, and with him has departed Hildegund, the light of my old age.'

The heart of Etzel swelled with rage and grief, as he rent his clothes and beat his breast; and his face betrayed the heaving of his soul within him, like the billows on a stormy sea. All that day he neither ate nor drank, and when night threw her shadow over the earth, he sank wearily on his bed. But sleep came not to his eyes; and many a time he sat up on his couch like one astonished, as thought after thought of sorrow and anger hurried through his mind. At last the morning came; and the king gathered his chiefs in counsel. 'Bring me,' he said, 'chained and muzzled, the Gothic dog which has run away, and I will give to the man who does me this service gold so deep that he may stand in it as a stake may stand in the corn.' But brave and strong though his warriors were, yet none dared venture to match himself in single fight with the son of Alphar. For them life was better than gold, and none stirred from his place. Thus it came to pass that Walter journeyed on in peace with Hildegund, by night on the open road, by day through the dim forests, until they had seen the sun forty times journey across the wide heaven, and twice beheld the full orb of the moon shed its soft light over hills and streams and valleys.

Then beneath them they saw the green waters of the Rhine, and the towers of Worms in the far distance. To the ferryman who carried them across Walter gave not money but fish from his net, and leaving him, he wandered on with Hildegund by the light of the moon. But when the morning came the old ferryman hastened to the palace of King Gunther to sell the fish which Walter had given him. 'Whence came these fish?' asked the king; 'the Rhine never had them in its waters.' Then the ferryman told his story, how yestereve there came to his ferry a warrior clad from head to heel in bright steel armour, with a shield on his left hand and a spear in his right, while close behind him came a maiden leading his warhorse. 'The steed was laden with two chests,' he said, 'and, I take it, they were not empty. When the horse shook them as he moved, there was a sound within, mightily like the rattling of jewels and gold. This knight gave me the fish for the fare across the Rhine.' 'It is Walter my comrade,' said Hagen, as he heard the old man's words; 'he is coming back from the land of the Huns.' 'Rejoice, my brave warriors,' shouted Gunther, so that the hall-roof rang; 'the gods are bringing to us again the treasure which King Gibich yielded up to Etzel.' Then at his bidding his war-steed

was saddled, and twelve knights with Hagen mounted their horses to go with the king; for so great a treasure, he said, must not go out from the land. But Hagen was loth that wrong should be done to his old friend; so he told them of the might of Walter's arm, and that no man yet had been able to withstand him. But the heart of Gunther was fixed on the treasure, and he turned a deaf ear to the warnings of Hagen.

Meanwhile, the path which Walter took with Hildegund led them deep in the forest till they came to a cave so overhung by two huge rocks, that scarcely could any who passed it know that there was aught within. Glad was Walter when he spied this resting-place, for since he left the Huns' land he had not dared to do more than to lean upon his spear, and his limbs were now sorely wearied and his eyes weighed down with the sleep against which he had striven so long. So taking off his armour, he stretched himself on the ground while his head lay in the maiden's lap; and bidding her watch and wake him if she saw the dust of horsemen afar off, he fell asleep.

But Gunther had marked the tread of their feet and the point of his horse's hoofs, and he laughed in his heart as he charged his warriors to make haste, for the Goth and his hoard would soon be taken. 'Nay, O king,' said Hagen, 'be warned in time. Walter is no child. Hadst thou seen him but once in the fight, thou wouldst have seen that this fox is not easily trapped. Many a time have I trod the same path with him, and never have I known him leave a foe alive.' But Gunther spurred his horse, and rode on the more eagerly.

From the cave Hildegund saw the cloud of dust raised by the horsemen, and she woke Walter with a kiss. 'Why may I not sleep?' he asked raising his head. 'There,' she answered, 'along the wood comes a troop of horsemen.' Straightway Walter shook the sleep from his eyes, and clothing himself in his burnished armour, stood at the entering in of the cave. But Hildegund trembled as Gunther and his men pressed on. 'They are the Huns,' she said; 'have pity on me and slay me. If I may not be thy wife, let none other lay hands upon me.' Then with a smile Walter pressed her to his side, as he said, 'My sword longs not for blood so dear to me as thine; it shall bathe in the life stream of my foes. So be of good cheer, Hildegund. The weapon which has aided me thus far will help me yet again. Nay,' he added, as the horsemen drew nearer, 'these are not Huns. They are the Niflungs of Frank-land, and with them comes my comrade Hagen.' Then placing himself at the mouth of the

cave, he charged Hildegund to be of good cheer, 'for not a Frank,' he said, 'shall ever say to his bride, that he has won without a blow the golden hoard of Walter.'

There, as Hagen saw the goodly form of Walter, he turned once more to Gunther. 'Be not mad,' he said, 'nor send thy knights to their death. It may be that he will peacefully yield his treasures, if thou wilt send a herald to him, when he knows it is the king who claims them.' This time Gunther followed his counsel, and the high steward, Gamelo of Metz was sent to ask Walter whence he had come and whither he was going. 'Comest thou of thyself,' asked Walter, 'or at the bidding of another?' 'Yea,' said Gamelo, 'I come at the bidding of the king, who will know wherefore thou rovest through his land.' 'Strange dealing is this,' answered Walter, 'to tease strangers with curious questions. But if he will know, go tell him that I am Walter the son of Alphar; that while I was yet a child I was sent as a hostage into the Huns' land; that through longing for the land of my fathers I have broken my fetters, and that I am going home.' 'Be it so,' said Gamelo; 'but first thou must yield up to the king thy horse and the burden which it carries, and the maiden with them; and in requital he will spare thee thy limbs and thy life.' 'Thy beard is grey, old man,' answered Walter, 'but thou speakest as a very child. Will thy master sell the bear's skin before he has caught the bear? But tell him, nevertheless, that if he will let me go in peace, he shall have from my hoard a hundred bracelets of gold.' 'The word is good,' cried Hagen; 'the jewels which his steed bears are right goodly. Take them and let him go, for my dreams tell me that there is storm and mischief in the air. I have seen in my vision a wild boar fighting with thee, and twice it bit thee to the very bone, and as I hastened to thy aid, it tore out my right eye with its tusk.' 'Good,' said Gunther; 'thou followest in the ways of thy father, with his faint heart and fine words to hide it.' Full of rage was Hagen, but he curbed his fury, and said only, 'There stands Walter; go and fight him man to man. I will wait and see the issue.' So going to a hillock hard by, he sat down on his shield to see the battle. Then Gunther laughed with bitter scorn. 'The sermon is over,' he said, 'and the dance may begin with fiddle and shawm.' Straightway, clad in his iron garb, Gamelo cried out to Walter: 'Hear, son of Alphar; yield up all thy treasure to the king of the Franks, or thy life shall pay the forfeit.' But Walter held his peace, and suffered the old man to ride up nearer and bid him

again yield up the hoard and the maiden. Then strode Walter from the mouth of the cave, and said, 'Why dost thou come hither, crying like a maddened hound? Am I a thief that Gunther asks me to yield up that which is in my hands? Has he lent me money on pawned goods that he seeks such usury? Do his people so hate all strangers as to let none pass through the land without paying toll for the road? Two hundred bracelets I am ready to yield to him; do ye yet grudge it to me that I should make my journey in peace?'

Wise were the words of Walter, and a fool was he who threw away his counsel. 'Thou bargainest not like a Goth but like a Jew,' said Gamelo: 'not three hundred bracelets but thy whole treasure will I have, and with that for my prize I bid thee now to join me in the dance.' So with a jest went Gamelo to his death, for Walter swerved aside from the spear which the old man threw, and the weapon was buried harmlessly in the earth. Then quick as thought, Walter's spear pierced Gamelo's shield, and his sword smote off his right hand. Mad with fear his horse rose high in the air, and throwing its rider fell back on the earth. Twice fell the sword of Walter, and horse and man lay dead upon the ground.

Then in deep grief rose up Skaramund, whom some called Gimo, nephew of Gamelo, and said, 'The fight is now mine before all other men: I will avenge his death, or die.' With no vain-glorying he faced the son of Alphar. 'I come not to thee for thy treasure,' he said: 'I demand of thee the recompense for the life of my uncle whom thy sword has smitten.' 'What sayest thou?' asked Walter: 'had I begun the strife, then might thy sword rightfully drink my heart's blood.' Quick as lightning came two spears from Skaramund's hand: from the one Walter swerved aside, the other recoiled back from his shield. Short, though fierce, was the strife that followed, until as Skaramund turned his horse, the lance of Walter pierced him under his chin, and he fell senseless on the earth. Then in his place came Werinhard, who was famed to have like bow-craft with his forefather Pandaros of Ilion. Thick came the arrows on Walter's shield, and for a time Walter bore it peacefully; but his patience was soon pressed too far, and springing forward he said, 'Now may the dance move free,' and yet a little while and Werinhard lay smitten by the side of Gamelo and Skaramund. After him came Eckefrit the Saxon, and threw forth words of foul scorn against Walter; but he paid the penalty of evil speaking with his life, and Walter drove his horse within his hiding-place.

But the strife was not ended, for then as the fifth champion came Hadawart, and called to Walter, 'Cunning worm, is thy body proof against all weapons, or against all over which the curse of the runes has not been muttered?' But for all the words that he spake, and the fierce blows which he struck, Hadawart also lay soon among the dead.

Then Patafrit, the son of Hagen's sister, thought to avenge on Walter the death of the knights who had fallen, and the tears rushed into Hagen's eyes as he saw his nephew going madly to his doom. 'Art thou mad and blind?' he said. 'Surely the shadow of the Norns is on thee, and the sands of thy life are fast running out. O lust of gold, O cursed hunger, that grows keener as the feast goes on! Who shall dry the tears which the longing for thee draws forth? Who shall cherish a wife, who has first bound himself to thee? Farewell, farewell,' he cried, as the young man passed on; and the mourning of Hagen struck on Walter's ears as he kept watch at Waschenstein. The sorrow of his friend filled his own eyes with tears, as he cried to Patafrit, 'Spare thyself, brave youth, and live for glorious deeds hereafter.' 'Why takest thou heed of my life?' 'My business is with deeds, not words,' answered Patafrit, as he hurled his lance at Walter, who parried it with his spear and sent it like a feather through the air, till it fell at the feet of Hildegund. With a cry of fear she sank fainting to the ground; but when her breath came to her again, and raising her eyes she saw that Walter was still unhurt, the life-blood once more coursed warmly through her veins. Twice yet or thrice Patafrit essayed to smite Walter, in spite of warnings, until, as he was bringing down his sword upon him, Walter bowed beneath his shield, and Patafrit was borne with his face to the earth. Once more he rose, and rushed with his sword against his enemy: but the wrath of Walter was now awakened, and with a single stroke he dashed Patafrit lifeless to the ground.

More fearful was the combat with Gerwich, the seventh of the Niflung champions. Not a word was spoken as the play of weapons went on, and fearfully the battle-axe of Gerwich came whirling through the air. But vain were his strivings. Neither eye nor arm failed Walter, who, biding his time, thrust his spear into his side: and Gerwich's eyes grew dim in death.

Through marrow and bone the Franks shivered, as they saw his life-blood streaming from the wound, and one and all warned the king that the fight had gone on long enough. But Gunther's eyes were blind with rage. 'Noble warriors,' he cried, 'this

fear does you shame. Think of vengeance, not of flight. Our names are soiled for ever, if we go back discomfited from Waschenstein. How will the noble ladies welcome us at Worms? How will the people look on us who are their champions! And is the Goth to triumph at our cost? I had rather die a thousand deaths than look upon such foul disgrace. We came for gold and treasure; but now our prize must be blood. Death only can atone for death; and vengeance calls us on, till the man who fails to win it rests with the dead.'

Again was the fierce flame kindled in their hearts by the words of Gunther, and they hastened to the fight as men may hasten to their sports. Room was there for two to fight before the wall of rock at Waschenstein; but Walter was taken at unawares, for when the Franks fell back, he took off his helmet and hung it on a bush, that he might rest awhile from the fearful heat of the battle. With reins hanging loose from his horse's neck, Randolf came hurrying before all the other knights, and with his mighty ashen spear headed with iron he smote at the heart of the Basque warrior; and had not Wayland done his work well when he wrought the coat of mail, Walter's days had then been ended. For the first time the sport seemed to him grim and dark, and his cheek was deadly pale. He could not get his helmet, for Randolf stood in the way; and now his enemy seizing his sword shore off two locks of hair from his head, which lay bare to every blow. But when Randolf brought it down with another stroke, the weapon stuck in the wood of Walter's shield. Quick as lightning Walter drew in his shield, and Randolf was hurled from his seat. 'My locks of hair shall cost thee thy head,' said Walter, as he dealt him the stroke of death.

Then the Niflung knights bethought them of a new device and Helmnot hurried forward with a grappling-iron fixed to a triple-corded rope, which his comrades carried, that, so soon as the iron should fix itself on Walter's shield, they might pull the rope with all their strength, and if so be, drag down Walter himself on the earth. Great would be their glory, if they could take him prisoner alive. Fiercely Helmnot hurled the iron, as he cried, 'Bald head, this grapnel brings thee thy doom:' and with a terrible hiss the hook bit into the wood of the shield. With a cry which made the forest ring, the Frankish warriors gave vent to their joy: and Gunther himself tugged at the grapnel sturdily. But vain was all their striving. Walter stood firm as the world-tree Yggdrasil, while three knights, Helmnot,

Drogo, and Tannenast, sought with the king to conquer a single man. Then was the wrath of Walter kindled once more, and shieldless as he was and helmless, he strode forward and with one blow dashed out Helmnot's brains; but as he raised his hand to smite Drogo, the knight of Strasburg turned to fly. Entangled by the grappling-iron, he struggled to set himself free: but before he could do so, Walter smote him on the leg, and reaching forward grasped his shield. In furious rage Drogo espied a huge stone, which he hurled down on Walter, shattering the shield which Walter had taken from him; but though Tannenast came to his aid, both were smitten down by the son of Alphar.

So were ten of the bravest champions of the Niflungs overthrown: and now King Gunther betook himself to Hagen whose warnings and prayers he had despised. But when he sought to appease him, Hagen answered angrily, 'Nay, why dost thou come to me? Am I not one from whom coldness of blood takes away all strength and courage in the battle-field? Do I not follow in the trembling and womanly ways of my father? And was not my counsel to thee nothing worth, so long as thou hadst thy brave warriors in whom thou mightest place thy trust?' 'Nay,' said Gunther, 'think not of the wrong that I have done to thee: think rather on our comrades who lie here before our eyes, stiff and cold. Grievous is it that we have given cause for any to say, "Look on the Frankish knights whom a stranger slew at Waschenstein, one fighting against twelve."' And even as Gunther pleaded, he saw that Hagen's mind was shaken, and he knelt before him, the king at his vassal's knee, while the tears streamed from his eyes. Then the wrath of Hagen melted away like ice before the summer sun. 'Rise up, my lord and king,' he said: 'it is not seemly that thou shouldest kneel to me, thy knight and servant. Thine is my life and all that I have, and thy will shall be obeyed. But two things have I to say. Not for my nephew's sake would I have sought to take revenge on Walter. His blood was on his own head. Nor will I dare to assail Walter in his stronghold. Victims enough, who have essayed this task, lie slaughtered before me. So long as he abides behind his walls of rock, not a hair of his head shall ever be hurt by us, though the whole host of the Franks were to dash themselves against the bulwarks. Better far to suffer him to go his way quietly, and to lay an ambush for him on his path.'

Right glad was Gunther to have this counsel, and falling on

Hagen's neck, he kissed him. Then they took their way through the forest, as the sun went down beneath the waters of the western sea and the moon rose up into the heaven. Presently Walter stood on the rocky ledge, looking keenly round to see whether his enemies were in truth gone. All was still, and Walter pondered within himself whether he should hasten away to the Basqueland while it was yet night, or wait till the morning should dawn. One thing alone seemed to him a sign of evil to come. What meant that kiss which Gunther gave to Hagen? That it meant harm he knew well: but whether they would come again with a fresh host, or lie in wait for him in secret, he could not say. Yet more he thought of all the perils of darkness, if he now left his stronghold with Hildegund; and so thinking he said boldly, 'Come what may, here I tarry, till the sun laughs in the heavens again. Gunther shall never say that I fled from the land of the Franks like a thief in the night.' So saying, he bound to the willow trees the six horses remaining from those which the slain knights had ridden, for two were dead, and Gunther and Hagen had taken the other three; and when he had placed a rampart of stakes and branches around his stronghold, he ate and drank with Hildegund, and having bidden her watch during the dark hours, he fell asleep.

Joyously the maiden kept her trust, glad at heart that Walter had come unhurt from the fearful battle. It was indeed sweet to keep guard over the sleep of such a bridegroom. The ravening wolf might cry in the wood, the roaring of the bear might be heard in the depths of the forest: but she was safe while Walter was nigh. So she kept watch, singing many a song which she had learnt in Etzel's house, telling of the deeds of mighty heroes, and of the glorious acts of Walter himself; and as she sang, the thought would come again and again, 'Am I worthy to be his bride?' but then she remembered that she was sprung from the stock of the mighty Sigurd, the Volsung, and she called to mind his fight with the dragon of the glistening heath, and the rescuing of Brynhild, and the slaying of Regin. So thinking, she wrapped herself up in her joy, and in a soft and lulling tone she sang songs of love which fell soothingly on Walter's ear as he lay slumbering peacefully before her. But long before the first streak of dawn tinged the eastern sky, Walter rose from his sleep, and bidding Hildegund rest, looked out eagerly for the morning light. At length the darkness was scattered, and he made ready for the journey. Four horses he led, himself riding on the fifth, while Hildegund rode on the sixth; but even as they left the wall of

rock, he looked yet again, and listened for sight or sound of his foes. All was still as it had been, and with Hildegund and the treasure he took once more the way that led to the land of the Basques.

But the maiden's heart was filled with strange forebodings; and they had scarcely gone a league when looking back she saw the forms of two horsemen as they came from behind a neighbouring hill, riding with hot speed towards them. 'See, Walter,' she cried, as she well-nigh fainted for fear, 'yonder come our enemies.' 'Yea, I see,' answered Walter. 'It is Hagen who is playing me this trick. He would pluck from my head, I well know, the wreath which I have scarcely woven; but be not down-hearted. The peril is not great, if we measure it by that which we had to face yesterday. Do thou take the good steed that bears our treasure chests, and tarry with him in the thickest covert that thou canst find, while I give these men my greetings.'

Scarcely had Walter slung his shield on his arm and put his lance in rest when the voice of Gunther was heard uttering words of foul reviling. 'Ha! venomous dog, hast thou slunk away from thy lair, and dost thou now show thy teeth like a wolf tracked by the hunter to his den? So we have caught thee at last in the open field, and now we shall see if the end of thy work fits on to its beginning.' Not a word spake Walter to Gunther, for all this foul speech: but to Hagen he turned and said gently: 'Stay, I have somewhat to say to thee. What has thus suddenly changed my friend into an enemy? Canst thou not call to mind the days when the thought of parting from me was bitter to thee? Many a hope have I built on thee, and those hopes are all a cheat, if thou seekest to do me to death who have done thee no wrong. How many a time, in the hours of need and anguish since we left the Huns' land, have I trusted in thee my ancient comrade! How often have I said to Hildegund, "Let me but reach the banks of the Rhine, and I bid farewell to fear. If Hagen lives, no one shall hurt a hair of our heads. He well knows that we are journeying homeward, and this only I fear, that he may seek to keep me too long under his roof, before he send us away laden with the gifts of his princely bounty, or go with us himself until we reach the march of Spain." Thus often, as I spake of thee to Hildegund, the thought of thee chased away our care and sorrow; and must all the ancient friendship of the days when we were one heart and one soul go for nothing? My love for thee knew no bounds: yea, looking on thy face, I forgot even my father's house: and is it for this that thou huntest me fiercely from thy heart?

O Hagen, if thou hast sworn an oath to Gunther against me, forswear it righteously, and as a weregild for the men who have been slain, I will yield thee gladly a shield full of golden bracelets.'

But Hagen could not look Walter boldly in the face as he made answer, for his rough words hid the true meaning of his heart, 'Nay, Walter,' he said, 'it is thou who doest the wrong. Thy words sound fair; but thou art the breaker of our troth. Has not thy sword slain my comrades who lie slaughtered at Waschenstein? Yet had I pardoned thee in this, hadst thou not done a worse deed, when thou didst slay my sister's son in the flush of his early youth, like an opening flower mowed down by the scythe of the reaper.' Straightway Hagen leaped into his saddle, and Gunther did the like, and the warriors stood face to face for the deadly strife. Swift from Hagen's hand sped the lance against Walter's shield, but, glancing off, the weapon was buried to the shaft in the earth. Less swift sped the spear of Gunther, and scarce hitting the shield-rim, sank lazily into the sand. For a moment the Nifling warriors looked fixedly at each other, then drawing each his sword, moved again towards the son of Alphar. But naught could they do against him, and in his folly Gunther sware that he would get back his spear which lay at Walter's feet. 'Give heed, Hagen,' he said, 'and keep him off me, if thou canst, till I seize the lance.' Quickly thrusting his sword into its sheath, the king grasped the spear-shaft; but pushing Hagen back with his lance, Walter sprang on Gunther, and would have dealt him his death-blow, had not Hagen covered him with his shield. In that moment the king regained his spear, and the game of blood went on again more fiercely till, weary with heat and toil and watching, Walter cried to Hagen, 'Why do we thus tourney here all day? Well I know that thy limbs are full of might: make trial of thy strength with me, and let us close together.' So speaking, he hurled his spear and smote Hagen on the side: but the steel of his corslet so guarded him that the wound was but slight. Tarrying not a moment, Walter drew his sword, and rushing on Gunther dealt a fearful stroke against his leg, and the king's right foot was hurled far away into the bushes. Deadly pale turned Hagen, as he saw Gunther fall, but he hastened to parry with his own body the death-stroke from the sword which gleamed in Walter's hand. Down it came on Hagen's helmet; but so firmly was it wielded that its blade was shivered into bits. Forgetting himself for a moment, Walter raised his arm to hurl away the haft, when Hagen smote off the hand which in a

thousand battles no man had ever been able to withstand. But heeding not the fierce pain or the blood which streamed from the stump, Walter thrust his right arm into the handle of the shield, and drawing his short Hunnish sword from his left side, smote Hagen fiercely on his face. Right well the weapon did its work. Cloven to the teeth was Hagen's cheek, and his right eye lay bleeding on the earth. Thus were the treasures shared which Walter brought from the Hun's land, and thus was the strife ended between them, for only for Gunther's sake had Hagen fought with Walter.

III. THE WEDDING OF WALTER AND HILDEGUND IN THE BASQUELAND.

THEN at Walter's bidding came Hildegund, and gently and cunningly she tended their wounds; but weak though they were in strength, yet neither to Hagen nor Walter did heart or courage fail, and each could jest at the other for his plight without anger or evil will. 'Bring hither the Goblet, Hildegund,' said Walter, 'and give it first to Hagen, then to me, and last to Gunther, for Hagen, if he be weak in his troth, hath borne himself right warriorly, but Gunther's arm has been slack and his blows without weight.' 'Nay,' said Hagen, 'I deserve not to drink first. Give the cup to thy betrothed. He is peerless among all heroes.' So passed between them the merry jest, and Hagen greeted Walter by the name of the sword-god Zio, who left his right hand in the mouth of the wolf Fenrir, while Walter bade Hagen make ready for the welcome which the men of Worms should give to Wodan who left his eye in pledge at the well of Mimir. So was the old love renewed between them, and when the time of parting was come, Hagen said, 'I may not now go home with thee, but I will send one with thee who shall guard thee well, even Volker whose harping none may withstand, and who knows all the paths of the land and the sea.' Then they parted, Hagen to go with Gunther to Worms, and Walter to journey on to Basqueland; and when the next morning dawned, Volker came with many a brave knight to guide the son of Alphar to his home. So was he guarded from the wrath of Ortwine, the heir of Gamelo; and they went on safely to the march of Spain, whence Walter sent two men to tell Alphar that his son was coming home. Full of joy was the old man, and right glad were all when they heard the

tidings. 'Why tarry we?' said Alphar. 'If any would have my thanks, let him come with me to greet the hostage-children.'

Eagerly the warriors went forth, and with them came many a fair maiden whom Hilda the queen sent with gifts of snow-white raiment for Walter's bride. Along the road as they passed, the greetings of the people rose long and loud in the air; and all, as their eyes rested on Hildegund, thought that never had so fair a face been seen in Basqueland. Then cried Alphar in the ears of all the people, 'The crown has long weighed too heavy on my head. Let Walter wear it now;' and the shout of 'Walter our king' was echoed over hill and vale. Joyous was the banquet of that day, but the guests spake of a day still more joyous when Hildegund should become the wife of Walter: and near and far went the messengers to those who should be bidden to that high festival. To the Burgundian land they went, and the heart of King Herrich was made glad that his child had been brought from the house of Etzel, and that she should share the throne and kingdom of Walter. From Worms were bidden King Gunther and Hagen, and with them again came the sweet harper Volker; and to Kiel went other messengers to bid Etzel himself to the marriage, and others to Lombardy to summon Hildebrand and Dietrich. Thus were Walter and Hildegund wedded, and the oath was brought to pass which Alphar and Herrich had sworn, before King Etzel with his Huns rushed like a whirlwind from the land of the rising sun.

The Story of Hugdietrich and Hildeburg.

GREAT in name and power, and rich in all things that make men wealthy, King Antzius ruled over the Greeks in Constantinople; but for all his splendour and might his heart was full of care, for the cold touch of death was upon him, and he knew that he must soon die. So he spake with his trusty friend, Duke Berchtung of Meran, and said, 'Loyal and true comrade, few hours remain to me here. When I am gone, be thou a father to my child Hugdietrich.' 'Of a surety I will,' answered Berchtung; 'but for many a long day may thine heart be gladdened with the sight of his fair face and his glistening eyes and the golden locks which stream in glory over his shoulders.' 'Nay,' said the king, 'it may not be:' and it came to pass even as he had said, and the child remained in the keeping of Berchtung.

Twelve summers had well-nigh passed over his head, when Hugdietrich spake to his master, 'Give me thy counsel in a weighty matter, and bring it to a good issue. My mind is set to win me a wife. I have honour and power and a wide realm: if I die, whose shall be this heritage?' 'In many a land have I sojourned both far and near,' answered Berchtung, half smiling, 'but never a maiden have I seen who may be a fit bride for thee.'

Then throughout his kingdom Hugdietrich sent messengers to summon all his knights to meet him: and when they were come together, the king put to them the same question. But all answered, 'The counsel must come from thy master;' and turning again to Berchtung, the king besought his aid in the matter. Then said Berchtung, 'In Saloniki dwells King Walgund with his fair wife Liebgart: but fairer far is his daughter Hildeburg, and of all earthly maidens there is none other whom I deem worthy to wed with thee. But her face no man may see. High up in a lone tower the maiden lives among her women, for her father has sworn that no man shall make her his wife, and though a kaiser himself should ask for her, he would say him nay. All day long the watchman walks the battlements to spy out any who may draw near to the tower: and all through the night the

warder paces round her chamber. To what purpose then do I tell thee this? With all thy might and for all thy wealth thou mayest never win her.' 'Be not too sure of this,' said the king: 'only give me thine aid, by the troth which thou hast pledged to my father and to me. My heart is fixed upon this maiden: wherefore hearken to me. I will learn to spin and sew, and broider with silk and gold. Seek me out then the best mistress throughout all the Greek-land, who may make me right cunning in all the arts of women. If I may not ask for the maiden openly, I must win her by craft.' Even so they sought him out the best mistress, and while twelve moons went round Hugdietrich learnt his lesson at her side, clad in woman's garb, with his hair streaming over his snow white shoulders. Then, when the year was ended, he spake again with Berchtung, and said, 'Tell me now, dear friend, in what guise I should go to Saloniki:' and Berchtung said, 'Fifty bold knights shalt thou take with thee, four hundred squires, and six and thirty maidens clad in rich attire. Take with thee also thy richest tent, and when thou comest near the town of Salneck, bid them set it up on the plain, and then sit on thy throne, with thy maidens and horsemen round thee; and so soon as King Walgund sends to ask the reason of thy coming, say, "I am a princess from Constantinople; and my brother Hugdietrich has driven me away because I would not at his will wed with an unbaptised heathen. Let me then tarry with thee till my brother's wrath shall have passed away."'

Right glad was Hugdietrich at Berchtung's counsel: and with the knights and squires and maidens he drew near on the eighteenth day to the town of Salneck. Brightly gleamed his jewelled tent on the plain, and brightly flashed the jewels on his throne, when the knight Herdeger, the messenger of Walgund, stood before Hugdietrich and asked him wherefore he had come into the land. Then Hugdietrich told the tale which Berchtung had devised; and Herdeger hastened back to his master with the answer. 'Of a truth, a fairer and a more royal woman I have never seen,' he said: 'greet her then, as it beseems thee, with a royal welcome.' Quickly Walgund went forth from his halls to welcome the noble lady; but when he reached the tent, Hugdietrich knelt at his feet. 'Here let me tarry for a while,' he said; 'and well I know that my brother himself shall thank thee, when he learns, as learn he must, that I have done wisely in withstanding his will.' 'Nay, kneel not to me, fair queen,' said Walgund; 'I am not worthy the honour, but thou with all thy people shalt have all that my land may give thee.' 'Here must I sojourn

alone,' answered Hugdietrich, 'for I have pledged my word to Duke Berchtung that all who came with me shall return straightway to the Greek land.'

So Hugdietrich remained alone, and Walgund led him to his castle, where Liebgart the queen welcomed him tenderly, and asked him his name. 'My name,' he said, 'is Hildegund.' Thenceforth Hildegund dwelt in the queen's chamber, broidering with threads of silk and gold the forms of men and birds and beasts, of fruits and flowers: and all that she broidered seemed to have life upon the canvas. 'Of a truth thou sewest deftly,' said Liebgart the queen; 'thou must teach thine art to two of my best handmaidens.' 'Right gladly,' said Hildegund: and for six months she wrought with them a great work, on which were seen the birds of the air, from the nightingale to the eagle, and in one part noble knights were chasing the stag, in another they were hunting the boar. 'It is a marvellous work,' said King Walgund, as he chanced to see it; 'whose hands have wrought it?' And he marvelled when he knew that the broidering was Hildegund's. Swiftly sped yet again the maiden's fingers, and this time she broidered a crown for the king, glistening with gold and gems like the rays of the sun at noontide. 'Now, by my troth, it is a right royal gift,' he said, 'but I will not leave thee the conqueror. Ask what thou wilt—houses, lands, or people; all shall be thine.' 'Shall it be so in very truth?' asked Hildegund. 'In very truth it shall be, fair maiden,' answered King Walgund. 'Then let thy child come to me from her tower,' said Hildegund: 'I ask no other reward, for I would not abide here longer alone.' Even so did the king as he had pledged his word; and Hildeburg was brought from her tower to greet the stranger who had fled from Constantinople because of the wrath of Hugdietrich. With kindly warmth she raised Hildegund as she sought to kneel before her. 'Nay, thou must be as my sister,' she said, as she placed Hildegund on a seat beside her, and hand in hand the maidens looked lovingly at each other, as they quaffed golden wine in token of welcome. 'Thou must learn her craft, dear child,' whispered King Walgund in his daughter's ear: 'for my oath must be kept, and thou must go back to thy tower with Hildegund.'

Hugdietrich's heart leaped wildly with joy, as the warder shut the two maidens within the tower, for none might come near them, and their food was passed into them from a window. But the days wore on, and the weeks, and the secret was hidden still; and at last Hildegund's cheek grew pale and her eyes grew dim, because the longing of love tormented her as with hunger. 'Dear

friend, what saddens thee?' asked Hildeburg; 'hide not aught from me.' 'Then betray me not, said Hildegund. 'I am Hugdietrich the king of Constantinople. Much toil have I gone through for thy sake, fair maiden, and far more yet am I ready to endure: but my wife thou must be, and at Constantinople thou must sit by my side, my crowned queen.'

The heart of Hildeburg beat quickly with joy and fear. 'If my father knows this, we die,' she said. 'But he needs not to know it,' answered Hugdietrich. So they abode on together, and the days and weeks wore on joyously, until Hildeburg said, 'I fear me the happy time is coming to an end for us both. I am a mother; and as we cannot flee away, the doom must come upon us.' 'Nay, sweet love, wherefore should it come? Our life is in the hands of God; and He who has given thee to me will guard and bless us.'

When, next, the Queen Liebgart came to see her child, they went together to the battlements of the tower, and thence on the plain they saw the white tents of a great army. 'I know them well,' said Hildegund; 'they are the people of my land, and Duke Berchtung has come to tell me that my brother is no longer wroth with me, and to take me away.' 'Say not so, dear friend,' answered Hildeburg, 'the joy of my life is gone, if thou forsakest me.' 'Nay rather,' said Hugdietrich, 'thou wouldest rejoice if after so long an exile thy friends came to take thee home.' So spake they while the queen was nigh; but in the night, when none else was near, Hugdietrich spake with his love, and bade her give good heed to his words. 'Let the watchman and the warder take our child to the church, and see it be baptised. If it be a boy, let him be named Dietrich; if it be a daughter, let them give it what name thou mayest choose; and yet more, so soon as thou canst, come thou with the warder and the watchman, with the nurse and the child, to the Greek land, and all shall be well.'

Then, hurrying away to the warder, Hildegund besought his aid in a weighty matter. 'Only give me thy troth that thou wilt guard the secret well.' 'Maiden, it shall never pass my lips,' said the warder. But when he received the charge about the babe, he wondered much and said, 'What wouldest thou say, maiden? How can this be when I have so kept guard that no man has ever come near this tower? If King Walgund knew this he would hang me on these battlements before an hour could go by.' 'Nevertheless, it is as I say,' said Hildegund. 'I am Hugdietrich the king of Constantinople, and to me Hildeburg has given her love. This is the secret which thou must keep; and when thou

comest to the Greek land, bringing with thee Hildeburg and her child, I will give thee a thousand golden marks with goodly honours and broad lands.

In the morning came the Duke Berchtung, and asked of King Walgund, when he rode forth to meet him, 'Where is the princess whom I brought to thee from the Greek land? Her brother is wroth with her no more, and I am come to take her home.' 'She is with my child Hildeburg,' answered Walgund; and sorely did Hildeburg's heart misgive her when the hour for parting with Hugdietrich had come. But as Berchtung took Hugdietrich in his arms in the joy of welcome, Hugdietrich whispered in his ear, 'Dear friend, I have wooed and won the maiden; and now leave me not here, for if I tarry longer we are both doomed.' Then said Walgund, 'Abide with us yet, Hildegund, and broad lands will I give thee, with knights and maidens and all that thou mayest desire.' 'It may not be,' said Hildegund; 'my brother is no longer wroth with me. I pray thee, let me go home.' And taking from his hand a golden ring, he placed it on Hildeburg's finger, and said, 'Wear this for my sake, and be true to me always.' In his turn Walgund bade his men bring a beautiful robe, red with gold, and besought Hildegund to wear it for his sake. So Hugdietrich departed to his own land, and there he dwelt as days and weeks went on, and the longing for Hildeburg pressed on him more and more.

In the meanwhile Hildeburg lay within her lonely tower, and there her child was born; and between his shoulders she saw a red crosslet, by which she must know him evermore. But no long time after this, Queen Liebgart came to talk with her child; and the warder said to Hildeburg, 'Thy mother is come. What are we to do with thy child? If the queen knew of its birth our hours on earth would be numbered. Where may we hide him?' 'Nay, it is for thee to give counsel,' said Hildeburg. 'Well, then, I see a way,' he said; 'we will let him down by a rope over the wall, so that he may lie safely among the bushes.'

Presently came Liebgart the queen: and when she saw Hildeburg lying pale and death-like on the bed, and asked her what ailed her, the maiden said, 'I scarcely know. I know only that I was well-nigh dead, and that now my life is come back to me.' Gently did Liebgart tend her, giving her all nourishing food and drink; but for all her mother's kindness the maiden lay fretting on her bed, for she yearned to know where her child might be. So soon as the queen was gone, Hildeburg rose up and hastened to the moat below the tower, and everywhere she sought but no-

where could she find the child, for a wolf had passed by the bushes where the babe lay and had carried it away to her lair. The warder peered through thicket and brake, but he pried about in vain: and when the maiden came to him pale as the dead for very fear and asked him for her child, he looked at her face and thought within himself, 'Surely she will die if I tell her that I know not where he is.' So he said, 'He is well, lady: we have baptised the babe, and he lies in the watchman's house.'

King Walgund was hunting in the castle woods, and spying the wolf which had borne the child away, he chased the beast to its lair, but the huntsmen had a heavy task before they could pierce through the thicket where the wolf and her whelps were hidden. When at last they got to the den, there lay the babe, and one of the huntsmen hurried with it to the king. 'A fairer child have I never seen,' he said: and all cried, 'It is but newly born.' Then the king bade them search the wood and see if they could find the mother, if perchance the wolf had not torn her: but no one could they see; and taking the babe in his arms, for to none else would he yield it, Walgund hastened to Salneck, and hurrying into Liebgart's chamber he cried, 'See here the child which I have found in a wolf's lair: it is but newly born and has not yet been baptised.' So they bare the child to the priests, and named him Dietrich; but men called him Wolfdietrich because he had been found in the wolf's den.

When next Queen Liebgart went to the tower, she told to Hildeburg the story of the babe and the wolf, and Hildeburg's heart beat wildly as she asked, 'Mother, whose child may it be?' 'Nay, I know not,' said the queen. Then as soon as she was left alone, the maiden hastened to the warder: 'Tell me truly, friend, how fares my child?' 'It fares well,' said the warder: but Hildeburg felt a strange fear, and she besought him for the truth's sake to tell her where the babe might be. Then said the warder, 'Forgive me, dear lady: but I spake for thy good, lest the grief of the tidings might take away thy life. Everywhere I sought for the babe, but nowhere could I find it.' Then Hildeburg's grief burst out in a great cry. 'Ah me, that ever I was born: cursed be the hour in which I lost my babe, and my lord Hugdietrich.' 'Weep not thus, dear lady,' said the warder, for no longer could he bear to look upon her agony: 'weep not. Thy father has found the babe: but I feared to tell thee, lest his wrath should be kindled against thee. If thou doubtest my word now, pray thy mother the queen to bring the child that thou mayest see it, and then shalt thou know that my words are true.'

Then went the maiden to her mother and said, 'Let me see this child which has come from the wolf's den.' But the queen answered, 'So dear is it to thy father that he will scarce let it be out of his sight: nevertheless to-morrow in the morning the nurse shall bring it to thee.' And even so it came to pass that when the morning came and the nurse bare the child to the tower, Hildeburg looked between its shoulders and there lay the mark of the rosy cross, and the maiden clasped the babe to her breast. Presently she sat by Liebgart's side, and said gently, 'May I tell thee, mother, of the things which have befallen me?' 'Surely mayest thou, my child,' said the queen: 'thy words are sacred in my keeping.' 'Mother,' answered Hildeburg, 'the child is mine;' and when she told how the child had been placed in the thicket and how the wolf had borne it away, Liebgart asked, 'Daughter, who is the father of thy babe?' 'That can I tell thee, mother,' said Hildeburg eagerly: 'thou knowest the fair Hildegund who came from Constantinople and taught me so deftly to broider. That maiden was Hugdietrich, the Greek king. He is the father of my child; and now, mother, take it for the best, for otherwise than it is, it may not be. Only give me thy counsel, how I may fare hence into the Greek land.'

That night, as Liebgart talked with Walgund, she asked him, 'What should a man do with that which may not be undone?' 'That must he leave alone,' said the king, 'if he be wise.' 'Is thy word sure?' asked Liebgart. 'Yea,' said Walgund; 'thou knowest that I never break it.' 'Dear lord,' said Liebgart, 'the babe whom thou didst save from the wolf's den is Hildeburg's child: and I can tell thee who is his father. The maiden Hildegund whom thou didst send to teach our daughter to broider is Hugdietrich, the king of the Greeks; and now thou must take it for the best, for otherwise than it is, it may not be. Only bid Hugdietrich come hither, and gold and lands shall he have for his wife's dower.'

Stoutly King Walgund struggled with his wrath; and early in the morning he hastened to the tower. 'Tell me, warder,' said the king, 'who is the father of my daughter's babe?' 'This only do I know,' answered the warder; 'thy daughter took me by the hand one day, and leading me to a window told me that the maiden Hildegund was the Kaiser Hugdietrich. And where then is my guilt, when thou didst shut a man with thy child in the tower?' 'Thou art not guilty, good friend,' said King Walgund. Then answered the warder, 'Where is

now the oath which thou didst swear never to give thy child in marriage? The maiden hath found a lord herself, and must not the oath be put aside?' Then cried all, 'Yea, the oath is gone; and now send for Kaiser Dietrich that he may come to his bride and his child.' 'Be it so,' said Walgund; and right joyfully his messengers rode presently away to go to the Greek land, and bare to Hugdietrich the bidding of the king. Then they told him all that had befallen, and how his child had been called Wolfdietrich because he had been found in the wolf's lair. And straightway the Kaiser sent throughout all the land to summon his knights; and with two thousand warriors he took the by-ways to Salneck. On the eighteenth day they saw its towers, and Walgund came forth to welcome his guest. 'The warder hath spoken truly,' said Hugdietrich; 'thou wouldest suffer no man to wed thy child: what could I do but win her by craft?' Glad at heart was Hugdietrich, when he saw his child in the nurse's arms, and took it up and kissed it: and right glad was he when Hildeburg came forth with her mother, and Hugdietrich kissed away the memory of all her sorrow.

Many a day and many a night there was joy and feasting in the halls of King Walgund, and then Hildeburg and her child went forth with Hugdietrich to go to Constantinople.

The Gudrun Lay.

I. HAGEN AND THE GRIFFINS.

SIGEBAND, King of Ireland, had an only son named Hagen, who grew up so hardy that at seven years of age he counted it shame to abide any longer among women-folk and children, and chose rather to handle a sword and spear with his father's men. And for all his fingers were so small that they could scarce close round a weapon, his strength and skill were wonderful, and few had ever seen the like of his sword-play.

One day King Sigeband made a feast and tournament; and after the jousting and the games there came a minstrel into the hall and harped so sweetly on his harp that all the lords and ladies ran thither to hear. Queen Uta sat there beside the king; and so wondrously sweet was the song that the warders of the castle abandoned their watch, and all the king's servants, down to the very scullions, left their work and came stealing in to listen to the lay.

The boy Hagan was left alone in the garden. And suddenly there was a terrible noise in the air: a mighty griffin swooped from the sky and came crashing down through the tree-branches, seized the boy in his great talons, and soared with him up into the air. Hagen's cries broke in upon the minstrelsy; the king and queen ran out from the hall, and looking up beheld their son in the griffin's claws. But while they yet stood watching, the griffin bore the boy high up among the clouds, and dwindled from their sight. Fast flew the monster, quicker than the wind; and Hagen, terror-stricken, looked down into the great deep beneath him. He saw the land slip by and his home grow far and faint; then they passed the coast; then on for a hundred miles aloft above the cold gray sea to a huge pile of bouldered rocks which dashed to spray the leaping waves that always roared upon them. The griffin wheeled above a pinnacle of the cliff, then hurtled swiftly down upon his nest and dropped his

prey among his brood; then without lighting, skimmed the cliffs and soared again, and fled away to sea. Straightway the brood of griffins began fighting for the morsel of prey; for Hagen was in sooth no more than a morsel for the smallest of them. But one of the wisest of the young monsters, whilst the rest were tearing each other with beak and talon, took up the boy in his claws and flew off with him to a tree hard by. Howbeit the bough whereon he perched brake with his weight, so that Hagen slipped from the griffin's claws, and tumbled to the ground. The boy scrambled to his feet and crept quickly away through the crannies of the rocks and hid himself. As soon as he was got over his fright and had begun to look about, he saw that he was come into a great cleft between two sweating rock-sides, where of old the cliff had been rent asunder from beneath, and left a thread of sky above. But all below was like a garden for fern and creeping green. And as he walked along a winding pathway there, he came upon three lovely maidens who, like him, had been stolen away from home in childhood by the griffins, though by what means they had been delivered from death, save only by God's mercy, no man knows.

When these maidens saw Hagen, they ran in mortal fear and hid themselves in the cavern, thinking him some strange creature come to do them harm. But Hagen called aloud and besought them for pity's sake to give him food, for he was famished. So divining from his manner and speech that he must be one of their own kind, the maidens came out from their concealment and gave him both meat and drink, whilst he recounted the manner of his deliverance. Then were they glad at finding that the boy was of mortal race as they were, and they took care of him. And Hagen abode with them a long time, till from a boy he grew a youth, tall and straight and large of limb.

Ten years went by, and all that while no other living soul came near the island, till one day a great storm arose. The rocks shook with the thunder of the sea, as the waves beat on them and burst in foam upon the steepest cliff tops. And a ship that chanced to pass that way was driven from its course, whirled up a great green sea-hill, and shattered like a potsherd on the rocks. Afterward, when the fury of the storm was spent, the sea yet all a-work with foam and heaving at ebb-tide, Hagen climbed down the cliffs, and peering about, saw the sand strewn with corpses, and how ever and anon the griffins came and carried them off to feed their brood. He espied how one of the bodies was the corpse of a knight clad in armour, having a sword belted at the waist;

and beside it there lay a bow and a quiver full of arrows. Then watching till the griffins were gone off again with their prey, he made haste and came down, stript off the knight's armour and put it on, girt on the sword and took the bow in hand. Just then one of the griffins came hovering overhead, and Hagen let fly a shaft at him, but it bounded off the creature's hide, and fell harmless to the ground. The griffin darted on the youth, but he avoided its clutch, and turning drew his sword and with one blow smote off a wing of the monster; and when the griffin sought to tear him with his talons, Hagen cut off his paws, and soon after slew him. Erewhile came the other griffin with all the brood, and these all beset Hagen behind and before and on all sides, insomuch that the maidens, who watched from the cliff, gave him up for lost. But his victory over the first griffin made him the more valiant, and he dealt so many blows that his sword could not be seen, but only a flash and glitter that played round about him like lightning; and before long he laid every one of the griffins dead upon the sand.

Hagen became so skilful with the bow that he could shoot a bird upon the wing, or a fish as it darted in the sea. Once as he rambled over the island he slew an unknown monster that breathed fire and smoke when it came ravening at him from a gloomy cavern. And Hagen having by chance tasted of the creature's blood felt it strengthen him. So he drank his fill thereof, and it entered into his sinews and gave him thenceforward the strength of twelve strong men; moreover his voice grew loud and terrible, so that he could make himself heard above the roar of the surf upon the rocks. Soon after, Hagan met a lion in the wood, and he lifted up his voice and shouted at him, and the lion fled in terror at the noise. But Hagen following, caught the lion alive with his hands, muzzled him, and bound up his claws with strips of bark. Then he took the beast upon his shoulders and carried him home to the cavern to make sport for the maidens.

Moreover, since Hagen had gotten the sword, he made a fire by striking sparks from the rock. Heretofore they had lived on herbs and roots, having no means of taking wild-fowl or flesh, or of cooking it when taken; but now they had both fish, flesh, and fowl in plenty, which Hagen killed with his bow, and a fire to dress it withal. And the maidens grew exceeding comely and well-favoured on their better fare. They also learned to replace their worn-out garments with kirtles woven cunningly, after the manner of linen, from threads drawn from the soft inner bark of trees.

Month after month they looked and longed to see a ship. No ship came. They built a watch-fire on the highest peak, and kept it burning night and day through storm and sunshine; but far as one could look there was nothing save the round sea and the drooping clouds, the drooping clouds and the round heaving sea. No ship came.

One hot, bright summer day, the throbbing blue sea lay white-fringed on the yellow sands, murmuring slumbrously. The cliffs quivered in the haze of the sun. The maidens looked and saw a sail; and they ran and told Hagen; and they were all glad, for they saw the ship steer towards them.

It was a certain Yarl that sailed with his men in search of booty, and he saw the island and made for it; but when he perceived three maidens on the beach clad in strange attire, he feared to land, thinking them sea-women, till Hagen lifted up his mighty voice and told who and what they were, and asked that seemly garments for them might be sent ashore. Thereupon the Yarl chose out the best raiment to be found in the ship, and rowed therewith to land in a little boat with twelve of his men. And after the maidens had come back from behind a thicket whither they went to clothe themselves, he marvelled at their beauty, and persuaded them to go on board the ship with Hagen. There he set meat before them, and made a feast of the best that he had. And after that the Yarl would know concerning their history. So the eldest of the maidens told him that she was an Indian princess who had been carried off by the griffin; the second said that she was the daughter of the King of Portugal; and the third, that she was a noble lady of Ireland. But, when they told him who Hagen was, and how he had slain the griffins, the Yarl's heart sank within him; for Sigeband King of Ireland, Hagen's father, was an enemy of his, and he bethought him straightway to avenge himself upon the son, yet feared the might of the man who had slain the griffins and their brood.

Hagen perceived the Yarl whispering with his men and presently caught them trying to steal away his weapons. Thereat being angered, he asked fiercely what was meant. And the Yarl spake, saying, 'I have suffered great and grievous wrongs at the hands of King Sigeband and his knights, and now, since thou art his son, thou shalt make amends to me.' Hagen answered: 'If this be true, it is no fault of mine. Nevertheless, steer thou for Ireland with me, and I trow that justice shall be done for any wrong that thou hast suffered.' The Yarl said, 'A man is a fool to go and seek justice with his enemy in his hand.' Therewith

he called to his men to seize Hagen and bind him. But Hagen drew his sword and cut down every one that came against him. He slew all the mass that fought him, until the few left alive were glad to take refuge in the far end of the ship, whence they dared not for their lives come forth. Then Hagen fell upon the Yarl, and him he would have slain likewise, but that the maidens prayed hard for his life. So he bound him hand and foot with sail cord, and flung him in the bottom of the ship.

After this Hagen cried to the mariners, 'Come forth, you dogs! Come, bend to the oars! And if the steersman be alive, let him now steer for Ireland.' Never a man disobeyed him. They sat them down at the oarbanks and the steersman steered; and on the seventeenth day they sighted the green shores of Ireland; but the mariners feared greatly to come to land, lest King Sigeband should put them all to death. Then Hagen said, 'Fear not; for I will send you all to bear the message to my father that his son has come. Be of good cheer; kings do not slay the bearers of glad tidings.'

When the messengers came to King Sigeband he would not believe them, nor would he even let his knights go down to the sea-beach to find if the tidings were true; for he deemed it an idle tale that his son could be yet alive after being carried away by a ravenous monster of the air so many years ago. But the mariners went to Queen Uta and told her; and she believed, and went straightway to the ship and welcomed Hagen, and brought him to his father. And even then King Sigeband could scarce for joy believe that it was his very own son.

After this, Hagen released the Yarl from his bonds, and finding that he had been unjustly treated caused restitution to be made to him in full for all his losses, and made peace with him. Then Hagen took to wife the Indian princess, and after King Sigeband's death, Hagen reigned in his stead and became one of the mightiest kings of the earth. And he made noble ladies of the two other maidens whom he brought with him out of captivity, and they wedded two of his dukes.

II. HILDA'S WOOING.

WHEN Hettel, the young king of Denmark, but newly crowned, was minded to take him a wife, he sent and gathered together his high vassals and lieges to his palace in Hegelingen to give him counsel. And Morung of Nifland said to the king: 'There is one maiden that for comeliness surpasseth all others in the world: that is Hilda, daughter of wild Hagen King of Ireland; and she is peerless.' 'That may be so,' answered the king, 'but Hagen is waxed so proud that there is no dealing with him by fair words; and many kings and yarls which sought to carry her off by strength of arm now sleep the sword-sleep because of her.' Then spake the sweet-voiced Horant: 'Full well I know the maiden. She is radiant as the soft new snow beneath the dawn. Stern is her father, and cruel as the north wind that tears the clouds and breaks the sea, and shakes the pines in his fists. Wherefore if the king must send a messenger, let him not choose me.' Frute spake also: 'Neither am I fain to go upon this errand. But let the king send and summon Yarl Wate of Sturmen; he is more reckless than any man, and heedeth no living thing.'

But when Yarl Wate was come before the king, and understood what was required of him, he was but ill-pleased, and said: 'I ween Horant and Frute to have counselled thee in this, and to have done in no friendly wise toward me. Howbeit I am not the man to pick an enterprise that hath no peril in it. I will go. But since Horant and Frute esteem my life so lightly, they shall go likewise.' Then Yrolt of Ortland and Morung said: 'It is well-spoken; and inasmuch as it behoveth none to hang back when brave men take their lives in their hands, we also will go with them.'

So the king made ready a great ship of cypress-wood, in fashion like a dragon. It was all aglow with golden scales; the anchor was of silver, and the steering paddle overlaid with gold. Within he furnished it abundantly with victual for the voyage, with armour and raiment, and presents of great price. Then Yarl Wate and Morung, Horant and Frute and Yrolt, entered into the ship with seven hundred of their men. They drew aloft the embroidered sail; a fair wind arose and bore them out of harbour. For many days they tilled the barren sea-fields, until weary of sea-toil they saw the welcome land, and steered in for Castle Balian, where Hagen the king kept court.

Being come to shore, Horant and Yrolt took precious jewels in

their hands worth many thousand marks, and leaving their men hidden in the ship, came to King Hagen, saying, 'Behold we have voyaged from a far country where we have heard of thy fame, and we pray thee take these presents at our hands.' Hagen looked at the jewels and marvelled at their great worth. He said, 'What kings are ye, and whence have you come with all this treasure?' Horant answered, saying, 'Banished folk are we. Hast thou not heard of Hettel, who is king in Hegelingen, and of his might and majesty, of the battles he has fought and the riches he has gathered together? He despiseth such as we, and being well befriended careth nothing for his men. Wherefore a few of us, weary of his overbearing ways, have left him seeking service.' Then said Hagen, 'Ye shall abide with me;' and he commanded to make ready lodgings for them in the city.

But Horant and Yrolt gave gold away so lavishly to all within the city that the people said, 'Of a truth these must be the richest kings of the earth.' And the fair Hilda hearing of it desired greatly to see these strangers; wherefore her father bade them to a feast. The Danish knights came at his bidding, arrayed most sumptuously. And the feast being over, and the wine outpoured, the queen and Hilda left the table, desiring that the guests might be brought to them in the inner chamber. First Yarl Wate went in, a huge and burly man, with a great rough beard and brawny hands. But when the queen bade him sit betwixt her and the princess he blushed and stammered, and then blundered shame-faced to the seat. 'Thou art strangely ill at ease in company of ladies,' said the queen. 'Aye mistress,' said Yarl Wate, 'I am not over smooth of tongue. I am not skilled to lisp about the weather. What shall I say? This seat is soft enough. I never mind me to have sat so soft before, nor to have wrought so hard in doing it. By my life, good ladies!' he cried upstarting, 'a good day's battle with a brisk enemy never wearied me so much, or made me deem myself so great a fool.' Hilda and her mother laughed pleasantly at his bluff behaviour, and sought to put him at his ease; but Wate would have no more; he strode off to the hall among the king and his men, and in an hour or so became himself again. For the king won on him. Hagen's big voice, his battle knowledge, and his love of fight, opened Yarl Wate's heart, and the two were soon made friends. But for the women, there was none in their esteem like the sweet-voiced Horant. He was fair to look upon as a woman, yet had no lack of courage in the battle-time. His wit was quick; and when he talked his face was in a glow at sight of the strange pictures in his mind, whereby

he likened things to one another in curious sort, so that all which heard him wondered and were glad.

Now Hagen spake much with Wate concerning sword-play, and the mystery thereof. So presently Yarl Wate besought the king to appoint him a master of fence to teach him a little of it, because fencing after their manner was a thing in which he was little learned. Then King Hagen sent for the best fence-master that he had, and set him to teach Yarl Wate the rules of sword-play. But quickly losing patience at the long list of early rules which the fence-master laid down, Hagen caught the foil from out his hands crying, 'Away with you! Why all this stuff? In four strokes I will teach this man to use a sword.' So the king fell to with Wate, whom, however, he very soon found an exceeding skilful master of fence. Thereat being somewhat angry, he struck in fiercely; and they both carried on the sport till the buttons flew off the foils; yet neither gat the better of the other. Then Hagen throwing down his foil cried, 'In sooth, never saw I youth learn so quickly.' And Yrolt said, 'There is very little wherein the serving-men of our lord's country are not already learned.'

So as Yarl Wate and his fellows abode continually at the king's court and feasted with him every day, it befell once on a time, when night was past and the day had begun to dawn, that Horant arose and tuned his voice to a song. The birds, waking in the hedges, had begun to sing, but hearing music sweeter than theirs, they held their peace. Ever higher and sweeter Horant lifted his song till it rang about the palace; and all the sleepers dreamed of Baldur and his home in Ganzblick in the sky. Soon they woke; nor were they sorry to lose their dreams at hearing Horant's song. Hagen heard it and rose up from his bed. Hilda and her maidens heard it, and arose. Men and women came thronging to thank the singer; but when they came the song was done. Yet none the more would the birds begin their lays; they had lost their notes from wonder. Then Hilda besought her father that by any means he should constrain Horant to sing again. And Hagen being no less crazed with the song, recked not for aught else, and he promised the singer a thousand pounds of gold by weight if he would sing again at eve.

At evening Horant sang. The people filled the hall and flocked about the castle for a great space. The sick came thither and remembered their pains no more. The beasts in the forest and the cattle in the fields left their food; the worms forgat to go in the grass, and the fishes left swimming in the sea. And when the song was done and the folk went their ways, they heard the

minster choirs and the chiming of the bells, but took no more pleasure in them.

Hilda sent twelve purses of gold to Horant, intreating him to come and sing to her in her chamber. The singer came and sang the song of Amile, the like whereof no man has ever heard save on the wild flute. No gold was ever so good. The maiden laid her hand within the singer's and bade him choose whatever he listed for a song-gift. He said, 'I pray thee give me but the girdle from thy waist, that I may take it to my master.' She asked, 'Who is thy master?' He answered, 'No banished men are we, but servants of Hettel, king of Denmark, come to woo thee for his bride.' Then Hilda said, 'So thou couldest always sing to me at morn and eve, I would not care whose bride I were.' Horant said, 'Lady, within my master's courts abide twelve minstrels, better far than I; and yet with all the sweetness of their singing my lord sings best of all.' And Hilda said, 'If that be so, I fain would follow thee and be King Hettel's bride. But I know not how. My father will give me to no suitor with his goodwill. I would go but I durst not.' Horant answered her, 'Since thou wouldest, be it ours to dare. We ask no more.'

Then Horant and his comrades got ready their ship for sea, and afterward they came to Hagan, saying, 'The time for our departure draweth nigh, and we must sail to other lands. But before we go, we pray you bring the queen and your fair daughter, that they may see the treasures which we have within the ship.' So on the next day, after mass, King Hagen came down to the beach, with his queen, and the fair Hilda and her maids; with them went a thousand good knights of Ireland. The ship was swung to a single cable, the anchor aboard, the sail tackle free. Upon the sands were spread the Danish treasure chests, filled with costly raiment embroidered with gold and jewels. There was a crowding round the chests to see; Yarl Wate was there, and Frute, and Horant; and in the crowding Hilda was parted from her mother. Hagen and his knights saw nothing for the crowd, and the queen forgot her daughter at beholding the glories of the raiment. But suddenly they heard a shout, and looking up beheld Yarl Wate leap on the bulwarks with fair Hilda in his arms; the next moment Horant and Frute sprang on board with two other maidens. Yrolt smote at the cable with his axe; it parted. The sail was hauled aloft, and twenty oars shot out from either side to lift the ship along. Hagen and his knights ran quickly down into the sea; but the rowers rowed hard, and armed men in the ship arose, seven hundred strong, and laid about them. Short

was the fight, and soon the vessel reached deep water. Loud laughed the Danes to see on the fading shore the angry crowd, the weeping queen, and Hagan raging like a madman, up to his waist in the sea.

Fast sped the ship and the wind was fair. The Danes made Hegelingen in ten days, and Hettel was wed to Hilda with great joy.

But while they yet sat at the marriage-feast Hagen's war-ship bore down upon their coast. Quickly the Danes rose from the tables, put their armour on, and ran down to the shore. Hagan drave his ship upon the sand, and leapt into the water with his men. A shower of arrows thick as hail was his greeting. Hettel rushed foremost to withstand him. There was fierce fighting betwixt the two for a little space; then Hettel fell, sore wounded, and over his body Hagen and his knights pressed on and hewed their way to land. Fast fell the men, both Danes and Irelanders. Then Yarl Wate encountered Hagen; and the battle-auger fell on both the men; they fought like wild beasts of the wood, till Wate being wounded on the head, Hagen's war-pike brake at the next blow he struck. Meantime the battle raged furiously. The Irelanders kept their footing, but could not drive back the Danish men; the numbers slain on either hand were equal, man for man. Then Hettel's wounds being bound up, the Danish king cried out to Hagan, 'Of what avail shall it be to you or me to fight this battle out? For every man of mine that falls a man of thine goes down. When it is done there will be an end to Danes and Irelanders alike. But if thou must needs prolong the fight, I will now meet thee, and if Hilda weeps for a dead husband she shall mourn a dead father too.' Then Hagan cast down his sword, and called off his men. And he said to Hettel, 'Give me thy hand for in sooth my child has married a brave man; and had I half a score more daughters they should all come to Hegelingen.' So the kings made peace together. And the marriage-feast was all begun again, and kept for twelve days in King Hettel's palace. Moreover a wise woman brought forth herbs and roots, and healed the warriors of their wounds. And after the feasting, Hagan and his men were loaded with gifts, and they entered into their ship and departed to Ireland.

III. GUDRUN'S LOVERS.

KINGS have not always the fairest children; but Gudrun and her brother Ortwine, the children of King Hettel and Queen Hilda, were the comeliest in all Denmark. Words fail to tell how fair was Gudrun; but they which beheld her beauty felt as though the stars had shone upon them. Many came from far countries a-wooing her, amongst them King Siegfried of the Moorland, with a great train bearing rich presents; but King Hettel sent him haughtily away. So Siegfried's anger was kindled against the king of Denmark, and he went back raging to his own land.

Tidings of Gudrun's beauty came to Hartmuth, the young prince of the Normans, son of King Ludwig, and he fell into a great love-sickness because of her; and choosing out sixty noble knights he arrayed them in the richest mail, and laded them with gold and precious stuffs, and sent them on an embassy to ask her in marriage. But King Hettel and his queen spake disdainfully to the messengers, and sent them away. So these returned into Normandy, and came to their master. And Hartmuth said, 'Tell me truly, is the maiden so fair as men have said?' And they answered him, 'Sire, a hundred days we spent upon the journey home, and since we left Hing Hettel's court we have seen strange things by sea and land. But we cannot remember them, for naught save Gudrun's image dwells upon our eyes, as when a man has looked upon the sun at noon and seen him burn. Then Hartmuth sware that he would never rest till he had won this maiden's love; and he took his journey to Denmark that he might look upon her. He came as an unknown guest, and Hettel gave him stranger's welcome at his table. When Hartmuth beheld Gudrun, he saw that his knights had not told him the half of her beauty, and being consumed with love for her, so that he could no longer hold his peace, he called one of her maidens privily, saying, 'Go, tell Gudrun, I am Hartmuth, of Normandy; and for love of her I have come over land and sea.' And when Gudrun knew it she pitied Hurtmuth, though she had no mind towards him. 'Bid him depart quickly,' she said, 'lest my father, learning what errand he comes upon, should slay him in his anger.' So Hartmuth went away sorrowing, and in his bitterness thought to come back and win the maiden with the edge of the sword, yet, loving her too much to force her into wifehood, he forbore.

Now Herwig, prince of Zealand, came also to Denmark a-wooing of Gudrun, and at the end of many days he spake to King Hettel

to give him his daughter to wife. And when King Hettel would not, but mocked at his suit, as he had done at the others, Herwig said within himself, 'This man is wholly puffed up with pride; let us see whether of the twain is stronger, he of Denmark or I of Zealand;' and with that meaning in his mind, went straightway back to his people, and gathered together his host, and came up against King Hettel and besieged him in his Castle Hegelingen. When Hettel, King of Denmark, saw Herwig's standard, and knew that he was come to fight for Gudrun, he said, 'Truly this is a worthy man. Hitherto men have pleaded but with words for Gudrun; have babbled and chattered to me as though I were a woman, not a warrior. How shall a man defend his wife in perilous times like these, unless he shows that he can win her with his sword? I like this fellow; the sword talks a language that I can understand. Good sooth, I love him well-nigh as a son already;' and Hettel laced on his ring mail and went out to fight him. Long raged the battle on the plain, but Herwig's knights pushed so hard upon the Danish host that they drave them back for many a furlong mounded with slain; till being hotly pressed against the walls, the Danes turned in panic and rushed, a wild disordered rabble, for the castle gates. Furious at being borne back by the press, King Hettel brake his way through till he encountered Herwig, and then so fierce a battle began that both armies paused to see.

From a window in the castle Gudrun had watched how Herwig smote down the stoutest of her father's knights, and as she watched her eye kindled and her cheek flushed at the glory of the man who fought for her. But no sooner did she see the deadly combat between her father and Herwig than she seized a shield and ran out from the castle and threw herself between the warriors. 'Father, for my sake,' Gudrun said. 'And you, Sir Herwig, prithee answer me. For my sake also will you make the peace?' And Herwig answered, 'If for your sake means all things henceforward for your sake, right gladly will I.' Gudrun looked upon the frank, brave face of her warrior, and loved him as he stood there on the battle-plain. And she said, 'So be it as thou hast said.' Then the warriors laid down their weapons, and King Hettel joined their hands, saying, 'I desire no better man to be my son-in-law.' And Gudrun said to Herwig, 'Thee and no other will I have to be my mate, and I will dwell with thee all the days of my life.' So plighted they their troth upon the battle-field; and after that a feast was held for many days within the castle.

And when the festivity was done, Herwig would have taken Gudrun to wife straightway, but her mother, Queen Hilda, said, 'Nay, for her dowry is not yet prepared, and it will take time to make ready a wedding-feast fit for a king's daughter. Is she not yours? Be content and wait a little; there is no hurry, and Gudrun is very young.' So Herwig was fain to go back to Zealand with a heavy heart for company. But lagging months make lingering years.

Tidings came to Siegfried, King of the Moorland, how Gudrun had given her troth to Herwig, prince of Zealand, and being fiercely wroth thereat he said, 'I shall kindle him a marriage-torch which shall set his land aflame and make Zealand Fire-land, for I will altogether consume it and burn it from the seas.' So he sailed across the sea-ways with twenty wide-breasted ships; and he turned loose his host of Moor-men upon Zealand and ravaged it with fire and sword. Herwig and his people fought fiercely, but Siegfried drave them back and pushed forward over the bodies of many that counted it sweeter to die upon their land than to yield it. And at last Siegfried and his host overran all the country, save only one strong fortress wherein Herwig and his knights were besieged. Howbeit, Herwig contrived to send a trusty messenger into Denmark, who came to King Hettel in his castle at Hegelingen, and told him of Herwig's extremity. Then King Hettel quickly gathered his warriors together to go and help him. And with the king came also Gudrun's brother, Ortwin, bearing his maiden sword, and Yarl Wate his master; there likewise followed Yrolt, Horant, and the greybeard Frute, and a host of redoubtable champions. And these all took ship, and coming with speed to Zealand, they fought with Siegfried and overcame him; and with the scourge of swords they scourged the Moor-men from the land, and burnt their ships, and shut Siegfried up within a rocky castle with water round about on every hand. Then King Hettel and his army pitched before the castle to beleaguer it. And Hettel vowed a vow never to rise up from before the walls till Siegfried should yield.

Now there came certain men into Normandy which spake to Hartmuth after this manner: 'Behold, Hettel with all his doughtiest warriors has left Denmark and besieges Siegfried in a castle in Zealand, neither will he stay his hand till Siegfried yields; and the fortress is so strong and well victualled that it can hold out for a year at least. Wherefore what hinders now from falling upon Denmark and gaining Gudrun for your bride?' Hartmuth turned this counsel over in his mind, but liked it not.

He said, 'Love hinders. Can the sword make love? Will co
quest make unwilling love more willing?' But Queen Gerlinc
his mother, said to him, 'Thou fool: did not Herwig with h
good sword win her love? And shall worse fortune follow your
This is no soft smirking maid to sigh and prate about, but a gra
war-woman, whose frame is stirred already with the blood of t
heroes whom she will bear. Go, fight and win her: conquer h
and she will glory in you; for such women glory more in su
defeats than men in victory.' So by these and many other subt
speeches being over-persuaded, Hartmuth sailed with his fath
King Ludwig and all his army across the sea-plain till he car
to the shores of Denmark, and saw shining in the sun the whi
towers of Castle Matalan wherein fair Gudrun and the queen ke
court. When Hartmuth gat to land he hid his warriors in t
shelter of a wood, and sent two of his noblest yarls to the cast
to intreat Gudrun with fair words to give him her love. B
Gudrun answered; 'Go again to Hartmuth and say that I ha
plighted my troth to Herwig, and so long as I live I shall lo
none other.' When Hartmuth heard these words he was ve
angry, and he blew the trumpet and set his host in array, a
came up against Castle Matalan and brake down the castle gat
and put the guards to the sword. In the great hall of the cast
sat Gudrun, her cheeks white with anger but not with fe
Hartmuth bowed himself before her and said, 'Fair Gudrun
repent me of all, saving only of my love.' And when for a lo
time she answered him never a word, he besought her to ha
compassion on his love and speak with him. She told him,
am Gudrun, and I change not.' So being wroth because of h
steadfastness he no longer hindered his men from pillaging t
castle. And they took Gudrun and thirty of her maidens a
carried them off captive to King Ludwig's ship where Hartmu
was, and put out to sea and sailed away.

Men came to Gudrun's father and Herwig as they were besie
ing Siegfried in his castle in Zealand, and told what h
happened in Denmark. Then the king's heart was exceedi
heavy because of the oath which he sware; and he bewailed h
lot, and all his warriors lamented aloud the cruel fate which h
befallen them. Then spake Yarl Wate, 'It is meet for warrio
to blot out grief with blood, not tears. Come let us now hot
beset Siegfried within his fortress, and drive him to make pea
So, having kept our vow we shall be free to avenge this great
wrong.' And the king said, 'It is well spoken;' and with o
accord they made so fierce an assault upon the castle that Sie

fried was fain to sally out and fight. The battle endured the whole day, and great numbers were slain on either side. At nightfall Yrolt came to the castle wall and asked a parley. He said, 'King Hettel will make peace if Siegfried does him friendly homage and holds himself at his command for service.' Siegfried answered, 'War will never conquer us, but peace will save a host of lives. Wherefore we are willing.' Then Siegfried and all his knights lifted up their hands and sware to do warlike service to King Hettel as their liege; and so they made the peace. And when this was done Hettel opened his heart to Siegfried and spake of what had befallen Gudrun. Then Siegfried made friends with Herwig and said, 'We were foes before for Gundrun's sake, but now for her sake we will make common cause against Hartmuth. Had you not burned my ships we might have quickly started on our errand.' Howsoever, it chanced that a great company of pilgrims were just then come to land, and Hettel and Siegfried seized on their ships and entered into them, both they and their men, and put out to sea in search of Hartmuth.

Now Hartmuth and his father were sailing in their war-ships bearing Gudrun away into captivity. They ploughed the salt sea-fields many days till they came to an island called Wulpensand. There they landed to rest them from sea-weariness. And one day as they looked out seawards they descried a pilgrim fleet with great red crosses blazoned on the sails. But as the ships drew near, seeing the glitter of helm and shield and bright spear-points flashing in the sun, straightway every man seized sword and javelin, and put his armour on. Ludwig and Prince Harmuth shouted their battle-cry and ranged their host upon the beach.

King Hettel, with Siegfried his ally, and Herwig and Ortwin, ran their ships upon the sand a bow-shot off the shore, and leaped into the sea to fight their way through all the host that met them in the water. With cry and shout they roused themselves to battle fury. Hettel was fighting for his child, Herwig for his bride, and Ortwin for his sister. Fiercely the two hosts met; the air grew dark with hurtling spears; the din of war rose high above the wave-noise: the sea lapped blood upon the shingly beach. Yarl Wate was first ashore; for when King Ludwig hurled his mighty spear at him, Wate held his shield like a rock; so the point stuck therein, and scarcely had the tough ash shaft been shattered with the quiver of the blow, ere Wate threw himself upon King Ludwig, and flung him reeling down, and so gat foot on land. The battle lasted through the

day; night fell and the tumult ceased; yet not because either host was vanquished, but since both were fain to rest. At dawn King Hettel and King Ludwig fought a mortal strife, and King Hettel gat his death-wound; but still the old Dane fought on until he dropped, and dying called upon his daughter's name. Then raged Yarl Wate about the battle-field, terrible in his fury as a wild beast of prey, for he loved his master Hettel. And the Normans feared his anger and the vengeance of the Danes. Many a Norman champion had been stricken down that day, and when night fell they that slept in death on either side outnumbered the living who lay down to rest. Far upon the plain the watch-fires marked the camps of either host. Day brake, and a mist lay thick on land and sea. The Danes waited for their enemies, and went hither and thither seeking them, but only stumbled on the slain. They came to the Norman camp; the watch-fires smouldered still, but no man was by them, for in the night the Normans had betaken themselves to their ships and had carried off Gudrun and her women and sailed away; and the fog covered them from sight. Loud was the clamour of the Danes, and fierce the wrath of Yarl Wate as a lion's robbed of prey. 'We cannot follow them,' said Frute bitterly; 'with this fair wind they are full ten leagues away, and we are now too few to venture on another chase.' So they made a mound of the slain, and buried together friend and foe, earth-covered, on a windy ness, and gat them heavy-hearted to their ships, and made sail for Denmark. But when they reached Queen Hilda's castle all feared to tell of that which had befallen them. The queen came out to greet them and to welcome home her lord the king. And when all held their peace, Yarl Wate stood forward, and bravely he outspake: 'Many years have I eaten of the king's meat. I have served him through field and flood, and how shall I lie to Hettel's queen? Gudrun is yet a captive. Hettel is slain, and with him the most part of our bravest knights are dead in Wulpensand.' Then the queen covered her face, and went up into her chamber to weep. Many a strong knight lifted up his voice and wept. But Wate said: 'Tears will not bring the dead back, nor rescue Gudrun. It is true there are but a handful of us left, but let us teach our boys to grow up and hate the Normans, and let us train their hands to war, and wait with patience for the reckoning day.'

Meanwhile the Norman ships made a fair voyage. And when land was sighted, King Ludwig called for Gudrun to show her the sun shining upon the green pastures and woodlands of Nor-

mandy. 'Behold,' said he, 'the land whereof thou shalt be queen.' Hartmuth stood a little apart to hear how she would answer. Gudrun said: 'I will never be queen of Normandy; I will never be Hartmuth's wife. How should I wed the son of him that slew my father?' Then said Ludwig, 'Choose betwixt queen and bond-slave, whether of the twain you list?' Gudrun answered: 'I have no choice, nor any mind for choice. My troth I pledged to Herwig, and nothing can ever part me from my troth.' Then waxed King Ludwig very wroth, and he caught the maiden by her long hair, and swung her overboard, saying fiercely, 'Death be thy groomsman and the sea thy priest!' But Hartmuth leaped into the water, and dived down until he saw the glitter of her golden hair, upbore her in his arms from the depths into the light again, and gave her to her women. And Hartmuth was very angry with his father because he had done this thing.

Now Queen Gerlinda had prepared a royal greeting for Gudrun, and sought to dazzle her with the splendour of the court. Arrayed in richest robes of gold embroidery she rode forth on a palfrey from the castle gates, with all the noblest knights of Normandy in her train. Beside her rode fair Ortrun, Hartmuth's sister, whose simple heart felt woman's tenderness toward a prisoner for love's sake. And when Ortrun saw Gudrun she ran and took her hand and kissed her. Never a word spake either woman, but the two were friends henceforward from that hour. Then with haughty courtesy the Queen Gerlinda stooped to kiss the captive, but Gudrun turned her reddened cheek away in sudden pride, saying, 'Gerlinda's kisses would lie harder on me than my wrongs.' Gerlinda made as though she heard not, but she kept that saying in her heart. With feasting and dance, with music and with knightly games, Hartmuth sought to beguile Gudrun of her sorrows; but she had no mind for beguilement, neither would she hearken to his wooing. And in those days Gudrun knew no comfort save when she might lay her head on Ortrun's gentle breast, and there weep out the griefs which she bore dry-eyed before the rest. Ortrun would soothe and hush the stronger woman as a mother lulls her nursling from its pain.

Months passed and Hartmuth longed for Gudrun's love, yet he refrained from importunity, because her peace was dear to him. So he watched and waited, thinking she might change, and lived on hope that each day would bring some word or look in earnest of a change. And when none came, his heart grew

sick from hope deferred. His very love grew cruel from its fierceness and its hopelessness; and he hearkened to his mother's counsel. 'Leave her to me; you are too soft a wooer for this haughty girl.' So spake Gerlinda; and a little while after, when Hartmuth was by, she talked with Gudrun on this wise: 'Why not wed my son? Will your pride never bend, that you must tempt me on to break it? Is Hartmuth not a comely man, and Prince of Normandy? Know you not that you shall sit upon my throne and reign with him? Why would you madden me?' Gudrun answered: 'You know that I am troth-plighted. Why weary me? If I were not, I would not wed your son. The blood of my kindred is upon his hands. Your palace is my dungeon; your crown a golden fetter red with my father's blood. How shall I do this wickedness, and break my troth, and break my heart, and bring disgrace upon my kinsfolk?' Loftily she left them, the red anger mounting to her cheek. Then said Hartmuth bitterly, 'Always the same: scorn and hard words. Mother, I will forget this woman; I will go away; and when far off, will feed my memory only with her unkindness.' Then, since the violence of his unrequited love was chilled, his heart became a thought more tender to her womanhood, and he said: 'Do with her as you will when I am gone; only treat her kindly, as becometh a king's daughter, remembering that she has suffered many things already because of us.'

So Hartmuth set out in quest of knightly adventures. But no sooner was he gone than Queen Gerlinda came to Gudrun, saying, 'Now, you despiser of the love of a prince and the kisses of a queen, I shall shortly break your stubborn will. You, who count Ludwig's throne too low to satisfy your pride—how say you if I send you down among the scullions to scour and scrub with base-born drudges?' But though Gudrun's cheek whitened, she answered straightly, 'Do with me as you will; I am in your hands; all that you lay upon me that will I strive to bear, but nothing shall ever break my troth.' Then the queen took Gudrun and stripped off her courtly raiment, and clad her in rags, and set her to drudge in the kitchen. With her also her thirty maidens, who were all dukes' daughters, were made to do the like; and they gathered sticks and made the fires, and cleaned the pots and kettles, and scrubbed the floors, and did all the foulest work in the castle; and if a filthier task could be found for one than for another, it was given to Gudrun. And their meat was beggars' fare. Thus for three years toiled Gudrun among the scullions, during all which time Ortrun was forbidden

to go near her; but often Queen Gerlinda would come and mock her as she toiled, asking whether she found court life to her mind. Yet Gudrun meekly endured, saying only, 'A constant heart for love's sake makes malice easy to be borne.'

Now when three years were over Hartmuth came back, having gained great renown for his valorous exploits in far countries. He had never ceased thinking of Gudrun. He remembered not her unkindness, but only his love; and in the tournament and the battle her name had been his war-cry. But when he came and knew how Gudrun was set to do the work of a bond-slave, he was angry and rebuked his mother, saying, 'Cruelly have you treated the noblest woman in the world;' and he spake no more at that time to his mother, but went down among the scullions to where Gudrun was, and took her hand and made obeisance to her as to a queen, and said: 'Dear lady, believe me I have had neither part nor lot in this. Will you not hear me now? See, I would take you from these noisome tasks and clothe you in richer apparel than ever queen yet wore, and you shall sit upon the throne of Normandy. Dear Gudrun, have you not one gentle word for me? For your sake I went away, striving to forget you, but in vain; for I can love no other woman.' Gudrun said: 'These hardships are less hard than your intreaties. My troth is given, and my mind can never change.' Being vexed he said: 'Did I not seek you over land and sea? Have I not, all these years, dared all things for your sake? Your very life belongs to me who snatched it from the wave; yet you spurn me. Is this a fit reward for deeds like these?' Gudrun answered, 'You snatched me from all that I hold dear—home, kindred, and the man for whom alone I would leave both. You brought my father to his death. For which of these good deeds should I reward you?' Whereat, losing patience, Hartmuth said in a rage, 'Drudge on among the drudges then! My mother was not far wrong if this be still your temper.' So he left her there to slave. But do what he might Hartmuth could not help loving Gudrun, and after a while he went to his sister Ortrun, saying, 'Dear sister, intercede for me with Gudrun. She has borne much and long: wherefore do you take her up out of the kitchen and clothe her in seemly raiment, and let her dwell with you in your bower. Comfort her, and make amends for what she has suffered, and seek to turn her mind towards me; for if cruelty will not soften her heart, perchance kindness may.'

At these words Ortrun rejoiced greatly, for she had grieved heavily at being separated from Gudrun, and bewailed her cruel

lot with many tears. So for a long space henceforth Gudrun dwelt with Ortrun, and Ortrun comforted her, and they loved each other as sisters. Very sweetly Ortrun prayed Gudrun that Hartmuth might find favour in her eyes; for indeed she loved her brother and admired him with a sister's pride, neither could she understand how he could be displeasing in the sight of any woman. And she pleaded yet the more earnestly, fearing lest worse things might be in store for Gudrun if she still turned a deaf ear to his suit. But Gudrun always told her that she could never break her troth to Herwig. Long after Ortrun knew this, she yet contrived delay, and put her brother off, saying, 'Wait a little; see what another month will do.' Thus more than a year slipped by, till Hartmuth's mother urging him, he would wait no longer. Then once more he intreated Gudrun for his love's sake, to give him hers. She said, 'I cannot; it is given.' Hartmuth said, 'Bethink you yet again. Herwig without doubt is dead or faithless long ago. Would I have left my promised bride in a strange land all these years, whilst I might draw a sword or fling a spear? Would Herwig if he loved you? Of a surety he is a worthless knight or a faithless lover.' Gudrun answered him, 'I cannot tell why Herwig comes not. I have looked for his deliverance, and hoped till hope has waned to wanhope. But whether he has forgotten me or not I keep my troth until I die.'

Then Hartmuth no longer hindered his mother from wreaking all her wicked will upon Gudrun. So Queen Gerlinda clad her again in the coarsest weeds, and set her to harder tasks than before. She was sent daily to the seashore to wash clothes from daybreak till dark, and punished with ill words and blows if the full tale of her task was not accomplished. Gudrun murmured not, neither for the hard labour, to which she had never before been used, nor for the harder sayings which the Queen continually cast in her teeth. Gudrun set herself so steadfastly to her work that before long no woman in the land could wash clothes whiter than she. All Gudrun's maidens remained faithful to her, and to their land, save one, Heregard by name, who being beguiled by the king's cup-bearer went away and abode with him, and grew hard of heart, and jeered alike at the sorrows and the constancy of her mistress. But for the rest, their hearts were like to break at seeing the hard tasks which Gudrun did so meekly; and the fairest of them all, named Hildeburg, who was daughter of a prince, spake openly to the queen of her cruelty. Enraged at this, Gerlinda sent Hildeburg also to the seashore to

wash with Gudrun. But this was just what Hildeburg wanted and she rejoiced greatly in her mind at being able to share the toils of her mistress. With her pleasant talk she cheered Gudrun's heart and lightened her labour, so that the long weary days passed quicker. And though they had to trudge daily through the deep snow to their work on the seashore, bearing their heavy burdens of linen, Gudrun was greatly comforted by Hildeburg; and she would often stop her work for a moment to put her arms round Hildeburg's neck, saying, whilst the tears stood in her eyes, 'God reward thee, Hildeburg, for all thy faithful love.' And Hildeburg would answer with a smile and kiss, 'I have my reward to be with thee.'

Time sped with Gudrun at her toils, till since the battle on the Wulpensand many a spring had come and gone, and many an autumn had yielded up its golden grain. Seedlings of King Hettel's time grew up and blossomed and bare fruit; saplings had grown young trees; and Danish boys, trained by Yarl Wate in hatred of the Normans, were grown up stalwart men, swift javelin-throwers, strong wielders of the sword, with all the mind to put their vengeance in their fingers.

Year by year Queen Hilda had set the smiths of Denmark to make javelin-heads, and sword-blades, and ring-mail. These she stored up in Hegelingen against the reckoning day; and she commanded her shipwrights to build seven great dragon ships of war and two and twenty smaller ships to be ready against that day. Queen Hilda had long given Gudrun up, thinking in truth that Hartmuth had forced her to wed with him. But she wanted vengeance for her lord King Hettel; and there was scarce a woman in Denmark that did not cry likewise for vengeance for a husband or a brother or a son. So all those years mothers suckled their babes to war, gave bows and spears for playthings to their boys, and trained them to a hardy life, and patiently waited for the day.

At last, grey old Yrolt said to the queen, 'The day has come.' A glad woman was the queen; and straightway gathered she her vassals together, Yarl Wate and Morung and Frute and Horant, with all their warriors; and she sent and fetched Herwig out of Zealand. Ortwin was a-rivering with his hawks when the messengers came to him. Blithely he loosed the jesses from the birds, took off their hoods and let them fly, saying, 'Now I have a better quarry!'

When all was ready the ships set sail. Many Danish women were there to see. Fiercely they rejoiced, because the day had come.

Yarl Wate steered first for Wulpensand. And as they drew near the island, a storm arose and the winds blew ; and ever there came upon the wind a sound of grievous moaning and lamentation from the spirits of the slain ; for the dead Danes lay restless in their graves. Wherefore as soon as the storm had abated, the warriors landed, and passed many days upon Wulpensand, watching about the mound, communing with the voices on the wind, and praying for rest for the souls of their kinsfolk. Each night, for nine nights, they kindled the bale-fire, and watched thereby till dawn.

One day, as Gudrun and Hildeburg were washing linen on the beach, they saw something like a white swan, which seemed to rise up from where the red sun sank into the golden sea. But as it drew nigh to them they perceived that it was a sea-maiden of rare and wonderful beauty. And the sea-maiden spake to them, saying, 'Ask something of me, for I know the secrets of the sea.' Then Gudrun besought her to speak concerning her home and kinsfolk, and how it fared with her mother Queen Hilda, and Ortwin her brother. The sea-maiden answered ; 'To-night, before the sun set, I was sixty leagues to northward, and there passed a fleet of many Danish war-ships on the waters above my head. I heard the warriors talk. Ortwin is there, Yarl Wate, and Yrolt, with a host of mighty-handed men ; and they steer for Normandy. Hilda the queen fares well, and sends them on their errand.' Gudrun said, 'These are of a truth glad tidings ; but tell me of Herwig ; does he live, and has he forgotten Gudrun?' The sea-maiden answered, 'Herwig is with them ; he has not forgotten, for I heard him speak of Gudrun as his dear and only love. Be of good cheer, maiden, there are strong hands at the oar-banks, and the ships will make no tarrying.' Having thus spoken the sea-maiden sank into the water, and the golden sea closed over her. Then was Gudrun right glad of heart, yet for very joy dared scarce believe the words she had heard ; and Hildeburg and Gudrun forgat to finish their tasks, being fain to speak one to another of their dear friends on the sea.

But when they got home at night, and Queen Gerlinda found their work not so much as half done, she becalled them the foulest names, and gave them only a mouldy crust and a cup of water for their supper ; moreover, she took away the bed whereon they were wont to sleep, and made them lie upon the hard boards. And when morning brake, and they looked out of their window, they saw the ground covered deep with snow, and the wind was blowing very bleakly. Then Hildeburg found her way to the queen's

chamber where Gerlinda slept upon a bed of down, and besought her with tears that if they were to be sent out to wash in the bitter cold they might at least have shoes to wear because of the snow. Gerlinda awoke in a rage, and turning on her soft pillows said, 'You shall both do double task to-day for this; and if you fail you shall be flogged. Shoes, forsooth! You shall not have them. Let your pride warm you!' Hildeburg prayed, 'Have pity on us, or we shall perish in the bitter snow.' But Gerlinda answered, 'Then perish! What care I if you live or if you die? It is naught to me.' Then Gudrun, who had ventured to follow a little behind Hildeburg, said, 'A day may come when you will remember these cruel words.' But the queen had the maidens driven out from the castle, and made them walk with naked feet through the snow to their hard task on the cold sea-beach.

Now at noon the Danish war-ships drew nigh shore, and Yarl Wate ran the vessels aground just off a headland where a forest stretched down to the water's edge. There the Danes encamped with all their host, both of men and horses, and hid themselves in the shelter of the forest till they might learn how the land lay.

When they had taken counsel together they determined to send out spies; and Herwig and Ortwin being bent on going, these two went forth to spy out the country, saying to their comrades, 'If we are taken, ransom us; if we fall avenge us;' and gat them into a little boat, and rowed along the shore and round the woody headland till they saw a bare bleak beach and two maidens standing by the sea.

Gudrun saw the boat and said to Hildeburg, 'Peradventure these be the men whereof the sea-maiden spake. I should die of shame if any kinsfolk of mine saw Hettel's daughter in this wretched plight.' And Hildeburg being likewise ashamed, they left their washing on the beach and fled. Then Ortwin and Herwig called after them to stay, saying, 'Good washerwomen, do not flee from us; we will not harm you.' But the maidens made as though they heard not.

Then said Herwig, 'For the sake of womankind we would have speech with you.'

Gudrun answered, 'You shall not plead that name in vain.'

Then they turned and came back. And when they came before the warriors, Herwig and Ortwin were astonished at beholding them; for though they shivered with the piercing cold, and were only clad in rags and went barefoot, and though their hands were roughened with hard tasks, they were royal women as a man might see.

'Fear not,' said Ortwin, 'we will do you no hurt. But tell us, does your master keep many maids so fair to wash his clothes?'

Gudrun answered, 'Yonder in the castle are maidens fairer than we. But, good sirs, if you mean us well, hinder us no longer from our work, for we shall smart for it at night.'

Then Ortwin took out rings of red gold, saying, 'These will we give you if you will only answer us the questions that we shall ask.'

'Gifts are of no use to us,' said Gudrun, 'they would be taken from us. Ask your questions quickly, but do not keep us idling from our work. We will answer, even if each word should cost a stripe to-night.'

Then Herwig asked, 'Tell us whose is the castle yonder?'

They answered, 'That is King Hartmuth's castle, these are his lands.'

'And Hartmuth, is he within the castle?'

They answered, 'Yes: and with him four thousand of his strongest warriors keep the walls.'

Now the maidens might have gone back to their work, for the warriors had learned all that they wanted to know; but Gudrun and Hildeburg tarried on, because the Danish tongue was so sweet to them and sounded like old music to their ears.

Ortwin said, 'Why does Hartmuth keep so many warriors within walls? Is he then at war with his neighbours, or has he need to rule his people with the sword?'

Gudrun answered, 'Nay. But he used to fear sometimes that a people far across the sea would come and take vengeance for a king of theirs whom he slew. Now, perchance, it is old habit; it is long ago, and Hegelingen is so far.' But at the mention of her home the tears came up in Gudrun's eyes, insomuch that she was fain to turn aside to hide them.

Then seeing them shiver in the snow, Herwig and Ortwin took off their furred mantles and besought the maidens to wrap themselves from the cold; but Gudrun said, 'God reward you for your charity, but it is not meet for a maid to wear the garment of a man.'

Now as Herwig steadfastly beheld the face of Gudrun he saw continually how like she was to Hettel's daughter, yet never so much as thought that it was Gudrun herself, believing that Hartmuth had long ago forced her to be his wife. And Ortwin said, 'Many years ago, was not a company of noble maidens carried captive to this place? And was not one of them called Gudrun?'

Gudrun told him, 'Yes: Hartmuth brought them. I knew

Gudrun well; and better than most I know how much she suffered, and how long. If you know any friends of Gudrun's, I pray you tell them, "She suffered, and she kept her troth, and died."' For Gudrun thought, it is better that my kinsfolk think so than know of my disgrace.

When he heard these words a great trembling fell upon Herwig, and he cried out in the bitterness of his soul, 'O Gudrun, thou that wast and art my only love! What can I do? Too late! too late!'

Gudrun said quickly, 'Man, do not lie to me. Thou Herwig! Herwig died long ago. I tell you I have seen him with his spear bear down an army when he came and fought before Hegelingen. No. Herwig is dead, or long ere this he would have come to save his faithful maid from shame!'

Then said Herwig, 'Who art thou?'

Gudrun answered, 'One of the captive maidens.'

'If you were one of Gudrun's maidens,' he said, 'you should know this ring upon my hand, for it was Gudrun's ring. She gave it me.'

Then a light came into Gudrun's face and the tears into her eyes. 'I know the ring,' she cried. 'I gave it; and to thee. I am Gudrun. Behold thy ring is yet upon my hand!' She fell upon his breast, and there he folded her. Who shall tell the tears they wept at greeting after so long sorrow? So they all knew each other, and Gudrun found her lover and her brother both in one day.

Herwig would have carried Gudrun off straightway to the Danish camp but for Ortwin. Gudrun pleaded likewise to be delivered immediately from her hard bondage; but Ortwin would not. He said, 'How can I steal thee, sister, like a thief? Fear not. We will certainly deliver thee.'

And Herwig said, 'Ortwin is right. We cannot do this thing. But be of good courage; we have many thousand stalwart Danes with us, and the day is nigh at hand.' But Gudrun's heart sank within her, for she knew that a short delay had cost already all the years of her captivity. Herwig said, 'Only a little while and we will never more be parted.' So the two men entered again into the boat and rowed away to their camp behind the headland.

When they were gone Hildeburg said, 'We have tarried too long from our task to get it done to-night, but let us set to work and try what we can do, if peradventure it may lighten our punishment.' Proudly spake Gudrun: 'Away with your tasks! I have talked with kings to-day, and they have held me in their

arms. I will no longer slave. Gerlinda may do her worst. I care not.' And with that she took up all the heap of linen clothes and flung them in the sea.

Now it befell that Heregard, that same faithless damsel which left her mistress for love of the king's cup-bearer, seeing afar off how the men met Gudrun on the beach, ran and told the queen that Gudrun had been kissing two fishermen; for such she thought them, seeing their boat and their rough furred mantles in the distance. So at night when the maidens got back to the castle, Gerlinda bowed herself before Gudrun in mock obeisance, saying, 'O proud and modest maiden, once a despiser of kings' sons, now not too coy to kiss base fisher-people on the beach, have I broken your pride at last? Nay; lie not, woman: Heregard, here, saw you.'

Then said Gudrun in disdain, 'It is not true. Never kissed I a man save he was of my kindred.'

The queen cried in a rage, 'Do you tell me to my face that I lie?' Then casting her eyes on the empty washing baskets, she said, 'Where are the clothes, you idle drudge?'

Gudrun answered, 'I threw them into the sea. There they may stay; I will no longer wash your clothes.'

Gerlinda's very fingers itched to strike Gudrun. Quickly she commanded to fetch a bundle of sharp thorns, and bade her servants strip Gudrun and bind her to the door-post for a flogging.

Then while all the women made doleful lamentations, Gudrun bethought what she should do. And presently she spake to Gerlinda, saying, 'How can I wear the crown after being scourged in sight of all the servants in the hall?'

'What mean you?' asked the queen, scarce believing her ears.

Gudrun answered, 'I am tired of drudging at your tasks, weary of rags and beggar's fare. My mind is changed. I will be queen. Go and tell Hartmuth so.'

Then Gerlinda, rejoicing greatly in her triumph, made haste and came and told her son. And Hartmuth, not yet daring to believe the words he heard, ran in, and though Gudrun was still clad in her dripping rags, would have taken her in his arms and comforted her from her long hardships. But Gudrun drew back and avoided him, saying, 'Let not my lord the king be angry, but to-day I am a serving-maiden, and in these tattered garments I shrink from before the king's state and magnificence. Array me first in royal raiment, that I may shame neither myself nor thee.'

Hartmuth said, 'Thou art queen already. Command what thou wilt and it shall be done according to thy word.'

Then said Gudrun, 'I would have a bath made ready to-night and all my women set free to wait on me.' So Hartmuth sent and commanded her thirty maidens to be brought from their tasks, and caused them to be clothed in garments fitting their high degree, and set them to wait upon Gudrun. And next morning when they were brought before the king, Gudrun walked queen among them all as the moon sails among the stars.

Hartmuth commanded the tables to be spread and piled with delicious meats; and they poured out the ale and mead and held a feast. The king set Gudrun upon his right hand and next to her the gentle Ortrun. Glad was Ortrun because they were reconciled, and she said to Gudrun, 'Sweet sister, I am happy because of thy relenting. My brother would have wed no other woman, and I was the next heir to the throne. I am not wise enough nor fair enough to wear a crown, but thou art worthy. Dear sister, I am glad.' And Gudrun being touched at the gentleness of her good friend, said, 'Dear Ortrun, God forbid I should ever forget all thy love and tenderness to me in time of need.'

Now when the feast was ended Gudrun spake to the king, saying, 'My lord Hartmuth, it is the custom in our land whenever a king would wed, that he should first gather together all his nobles to a feast, that they may see their queen and approve the king's choice, and so have no excuse for after strife.'

Hartmuth answered, 'After thine own manner will I wed thee.' So he sent out messengers to go all round the country and summon his lords to the banquet. But Gudrun went away to her chamber, and when she was alone with her handmaidens she bade them be of good courage for deliverance was certainly nigh at hand; and she spake to them concerning Herwig and her brother whom she had met on the sea-beach. Then were they all glad, and Gudrun laughed aloud for joy. But a certain damsel of the castle passing by the chamber door, heard her laugh and went and told the queen. And Gerlinda went and told Hartmuth, saying, 'Gudrun laughed to-night. She has not laughed for years. This is an ill-foreboding; I feel as though some evil hung above our heads.' But Hartmuth answered, 'What idle fear is this? Gudrun laughed? Why not? It is fit she should make merry, and rejoice to end her toil, and wed with me, and be the Queen of Normandy.' So with a smile he bade his mother go to rest; but he went down into the hall and walked among his

guards and set the watches for the night. Gerlinda lay and tossed upon her bed of down, and sleepless longed for day, yet feared to see it break.

Two of Gudrun's maidens watched at her window through the night; a wild March night, when the clouds were torn in the windy sky and the very heavens seemed adrift with the stars. So softly gathered the Danes about the castle walls that no noise was heard save the sea leaping on the sounding beach and the gust that shook the trees and howled among the castle battlements. But in the first grey dawn the maidens saw things move beneath the window, and ever and anon the glint of a spear, till as the darkness lifted they perceived the Danish host and their banners, and ran to Gudrun, saying, 'Wake mistress, wake, for help has come.'

Just then the warder sounded an alarm, and the castle woke into a tumult of noise and clangour as Hartmuth and his knights girt on their armour and hurried to the battlements. Thence they looked out and saw the avenging banner of the son of Hettel blazoned with dagger points over stripes of blood, and Siegfried's escutcheon marked with a red-gold head upon a field of brown. They saw a white banner with gold streaks which Queen Hilda wrought for old Yarl Wate; and foremost of all, the flag of Herwig, King of Zealand, with sea-weed figured on an azure field. Then came Hartmuth down to the great hall with his father Ludwig, and put himself at the head of all his warriors and gave command to open the castle gates. But his mother came and besought him, saying, 'Why go out and fight, my son? Is there not victual in the castle for a year? Then let them rage against the walls, whilst you hurl missiles and great stones upon them, or shoot out quarrels from the loopholes. Go not out against them, for I fear evil will come of it, and something tells me I shall never see you more.'

But Hartmuth said to his knights, 'Take her away. This is no place for women.' And when they had so done he cried, 'Fling open the gates!' and with his mighty following, swarmed out upon the foe. First he met Ortwin, and they brake a spear together, but the crush of battle parted them. Then again they met, and Hartmuth clave Ortwin's helmet and rejoiced to see the blood of his enemy. But a hundred spears pressed forward and strong Danish hands were there to drag Prince Ortwin from his death. Then far as a man might see the war-waves rolled upon the plain, and the hosts swayed to and fro in one great angry battle-tide. And as here and there upon a sea a billow swells

more angry than the rest, so round Yarl Wate and Herwig, and round about Hartmuth and King Ludwig, the war-waves raged most furiously. Ludwig and Herwig fought; Herwig burning to avenge King Hettel's death; but Ludwig brought him to his knees and struck him senseless for the moment with his heavy blade. A sturdy Dane put forth his body in that instant and took the death-blow meant for his master. Full of bitter shame was Herwig that Gudrun should see him on his knees before the slayer of her father; and he arose and snatched his sword again and while King Ludwig raised his arm to strike, smote him through the armpit to the heart; so the king rolled down and sobbed his life-blood out upon the sand. King Ludwig being slain, the Danes gave a great shout and tare the Norman host to pieces like clouds tattered in the blast. Hartmuth made a great stand against Wate before the castle doors, but the old Yarl's blows were like a sledge-hammer beating a smith's anvil; and in the midst of the fray Hartmuth heard his sister's voice shrieking for help, for a murderous Dane had got into the castle and she was struggling for her life. Yarl Wate knew it and let him go; so Hartmuth turned to the castle gate and saw the man come running out, for Gudrun's women had fought for Ortrun and driven him down, and he was thinking to escape; but Hartmuth killed him in the gateway, and then ran to fight Yarl Wate again.

Now Ortrun looked out from the window, and beheld how the Normans were slain on all sides by the fierce-hearted Danes, and she fell down at Gudrun's feet and besought her, saying, 'Have pity on my people, on my friends and kindred. For the dead's sake spare the living. Scarce a handful of our men remain. My father has been slain as thine was. Have pity on us: you have had blood for blood. And see,—O sister, see how Wate is pressing on my brother Hartmuth! He will kill him in his cruel war-rage. Hartmuth is faint and staggers! Save my brother, sweet Gudrun; pity us, and bid the battle cease.'

Then Gudrun took Ortrun in her arms and kissed her, and said, 'Sister, God forbid that I should forget all thy tenderness to me; but what can I do? How can I end this bitter strife?' And Ortrun took her kerchief, saying, 'Wave it to Herwig. Make no tarrying, for the love of God, or Hartmuth will be slain!' So Gudrun waved it from the window and by good fortune Herwig saw it and came to the wall. Gudrun said, 'Quick! stay the battle, as you love me. Save Hartmuth. See. Make haste!'

Then Herwig hasted, and ran in betwixt Yarl Wate and Hart

muth and cried aloud, 'Gudrun bids the battle cease Let no more blood be shed.' But the battle-madness was on Yarl Wate and he was terrible to friend and foe. 'What! cease at a woman's bidding?' and he took Herwig by the middle and flung him far afield, then ran again on Hartmuth hungering ravenously for his life. But they blew the trumpet and the battle was stayed; and the host came up, and some with their shields sheltered Hartmuth; others, a great company of them, hustled Wate away. So Hartmuth was saved from death; and they took and bound him and carried him off captive to their ships. Then the Danes hewed down the castle doors with their axes and brake in for plunder. They carried off King Ludwig's treasure chests with all his gold and jewels, and beat down all that hindered them.

Ortrun sought Gudrun and came weeping, saying, 'Thy people are athirst for blood. They slay on all hands men and women. They will have my life: save me, good sister!' Gudrun answered, 'Fear not, thy life is dearer to me than my own. Come in with us, thou and thy maidens. No evil shall come nigh thee, dear sister.'

Then came also the Queen Gerlinda wringing her hands and wailing bitterly. She knelt down and kissed Gudrun's feet, and covered them with her tears, and craved for mercy, saying, 'O mighty queen! deliver me from this blood-thirsty band.'

Gudrun said: 'Did ever prayer or cry of mine once melt your stony heart? Have you not turned a deaf ear to my sharp distress? Yet I will let you in. Be in my chamber as one of my maidens.' Then Gudrun let her in, and made fast her chamber door; and all the women crowded together for fear at hearing the terrible sounds in the castle.

There came a mighty blow which brake down the chamber-door. Yarl Wate ran foaming in among the women; blood upon his jaws and beard, blood upon his hands; his armour reeking with fresh blood; he, like a wild war-beast, blood ravenous still. Fearless, Gudrun, went to him. 'Away, thou man of blood! this is no fit guise for women's company.' The old yarl blundered to his knee. 'Pardon, Queen Gudrun, but I would know who these women be.'

Gudrun said: 'That is Ortrun, my friend and sister, see thou touch her not. Those are her waiting women. These are my maidens that came with me from Hegelingen. Now begone. So he went off grumbling.

Then quickly ran the false Heregard into the chamber, intreating to stand with Gudrun's maids. Gudrun said, 'Of your will

you left them; you shall not return to them of mine. Go stand with Ortrun's women if you choose.'

Yarl Wate raged up and down the castle seeking Gerlinda, but at last came back to Gudrun's chamber in a fury. 'Where is that woman? Give her up to me. I tell you she is here: and I will have her.'

Gudrun answered boldly, 'She is not here.'

Wate said, 'Then I will slay them all, for one I know is she.' Now Queen Gerlinda had crouched down behind the other women, and at these terrible words the rest fell down upon their knees; so Wate saw her. Then he came and dragged her to the door by the hair, and saying fiercely, 'Have you any more clothes for my queen's daughter to wash to-day?' cut off her head; whereat the women shrieked in terror. He said, 'Now I will have her that sold herself to that dead woman;' and at this so many of the maidens looked towards Heregard, that Wate seized her, and at one blow sent her head rolling on the floor.

Now after the strife was done and they had buried the bodies of the slain, the Danes carried off five hundred captives to their ships and much treasure, and set sail for Denmark. Ortrun went with Gudrun in one ship, and Hartmuth went in keeping of Yarl Wate. Proudly they sailed home to Castle Matalan, and joyful was the greeting that Queen Hilda gave her warriors. They held a royal feast with music and with dance, and day by day in the mead-hall the skalds sang of the deeds that each man had done in battle.

Long pondered Gudrun in her mind how the long strife between the Danes and Normans might be ended; for she thought, a day will come when the Normans will grow strong again and seek revenge; first they, then we may conquer, and the feud will never cease. So she went to her brother Ortwin, and said, 'Brother, let us make a lasting peace with the Normans; and thereto that we may bind both peoples do thou take the gentle Ortrun for thy wife.' Ortwin said, 'I am in nowise loth, for Ortrun is both fair and tender of heart. But would Ortrun wed with me? Have we not slain her father and her mother?' Gudrun said, 'Ask her; she is all gentleness.'

And a little after that came Ortrun shyly to Gudrun, saying, 'Shall I?' Gudrun answered, 'You have called me sister; will you be my real sister?' Ortrun kissed her—'Dear sister, I will.'

Then Gudrun made intercession with the queen her mother that Hartmuth might be set at liberty; and this being granted,

he was brought into the great hall, not knowing whether life or death should be his portion. Gudrun came and led him away a little apart and spake with him. 'Hartmuth look forward many years; think of the children of our peoples, and their children's children. What if this strife go on through many generations, and our boys be only born to die in battle, and our girls to grow up mothers weeping for their dead? Is it not better to establish peace for ever? My brother would wed thy sister, and we offer thee the noblest maiden in our realm, the lady Hildeburg, that was ever a sweet and faithful friend to me, to be thy wife. Wilt thou thus make alliance with us and put an end to many sorrows throughout many ages?'

Hartmuth walked to and fro upon the pavement, and for a long while answered nothing, but went on turning over many things in his mind, and weighing his long love against the long future of his people. Presently he spake: 'When Ortwin weds with Ortrun, I will take Hildeburg to wife.' Gudrun was moved to tears, and took him by the hand and called him friend, and kissed him for the first and only time; and that in sight of Herwig and of all the people. Then lightly ran she off to Hildeburg with these glad tidings, knowing aforetime the secret of her heart.

Such a day was never known for rejoicing in Denmark as when Gudrun and Herwig were wed, and with them Ortwin and Ortrun, and Hartmuth and Hildeburg. The five hundred captives were set free, and Danes and Normans made a solemn vow that peace should henceforth be betwixt them, since they were become of one blood. Thenceforward, in the long years of quiet, when both peoples prospered and grew rich, their children's children sitting by the fireside told the tale of Gudrun, and blessed her that she made the peace.

The Story of Frithjof and Ingebjorg.

King Belé of Norroway had a little daughter named Ingebjorg. The boy Frithjof was her playfellow in her father's palace. No king's son nor royal prince was Frithjof: he was only Thane Thorsten's boy. But the king and the thane were friends; and because friendship makes all men equal, there was no more constraint betwixt king and thane than betwixt their two children which played together in the palace.

When Ingebjorg was six years old it came into King Belé's mind to send her to the sage Hilding, to learn the wisdom of men and the knowledge of the gods; but liking not to part the children, he asked leave of Thorsten and sent Frithjof also, to be brought up with her in all the learning of the time.

Hilding dwelt by the sea. Above the windy cliffs, far up a bleak down-side, was a garden in the hollow of the hills, sheltered by wood and mountain; a garden where one might always hear the breaking of the waters on the beach. There Hilding dwelt; there he taught Ingebjorg and Frithjof many years. You have seen the bud that swells and pinkens till the glory of the rose unfolds? So fair grew Ingebjorg. You have seen the sapling oak grow up and lift its arms to brave the storm? So strong grew Frithjof. Hilding taught Frithjof the Runes because he was the elder; but Ingebjorg learned them of her playmate. In the open air she learned them, from his lips, wandering with him across breezy hills, or through forests of murmurous pine, or sitting at his feet by the sea-shore, watching the white-fringed waves curl in. The first spring flowers of the year, the first summer fruit, Ingebjorg took from Frithjof's hands. For her he climbed the tallest trees to bring down birds' nests; for her he clambered up the steep black crag upon the promontory, and robbed the eagle's eyrie. Sometimes in a little boat the boy would venture with her far out upon the heaving sea; but if the wind blew and heeled the boat a-list, or drave the spray in sheets upon them, Ingebjorg would only clap her hands for joy: she had no fear where Frithjof was.

As their childhood wore away Ingebjorg stayed oftener at

home, learning embroidery and womanly work; Frithjof grew up a great hunter. Yet ever he brought his spoils to Ingebjorg—no longer flowers and fruit, but heads of wild boar, skins of bear.

In the long winter evenings, sitting round the hearth, Hilding would tell them stories of the gods. Sometimes he spake of Freyja and her golden hair which is praised in all lands; but Frithjof would smooth Ingebjorg's shining tresses, and think, 'Freyja's hair is less beautiful and golden than this.' Sometimes he talked of Frigga, and how she had the most lovely eyes in all the world; but Frithjof looked into Ingebjorg's sweet blue eyes, and believed it not.

Hear a story Hilding told them :—

Baldur's Death.

Baldur was fairest of all the sons of Odin Allfather. Radiant and shining was his body; when he rode his white horse through the sky, light streamed out from him over all the earth. Who so dear to gods and men as Baldur! Wise and sweet were his words. The gods kept silence in Asgard when he spake. Baldur made wells of water on the earth. Wheresoever he thrust his spear into the ground a spring of water gushed forth, and a grove of trees sprang up. Those springs never fail and those trees are evermore renewed; and so long as the world lasts the groves shall be holy sanctuaries which no man may profane, but wherein priests continually shall sacrifice.

Baldur's home was a palace called Breidablick, built on pillars in the heavens, far above the clouds, farther than eye can see; far above storm and rain; where flowers never fade and summer never dies. There Baldur dwelt with Nanna, his soft-eyed wife, in perfect happiness; for no evil thing could pass the pillars of his palace. He loved all things in heaven and earth. Asgard was filled with joy because he was glad, and beneath his smile the earth laughed.

But evil dreams came to Baldur in his sleep. He dreamed that he should die; and when he was awake the like sad foreboding fastened on his mind, so that a gloom came over him. Nanna sat and sighed because of his sorrow; his mother Frigga, goddess of earth, wept secretly, and all Asgard was saddened. Odin Allfather took counsel with the gods, and meditated day and night, but all in vain. Neither could his wise ravens, Huginn and Muninn, who know the thing that has been and is, tell him aught of what should befall Baldur.

Then Odin determined to go down to the pale kingdom of

Death to find out what it was that threatened the son most dear to him. He mounted his steed Sleipnir; and his two wolves following and the two wise ravens circling round his head, he sped down like lightning through the air and coming to earth took the path that leads to the cold regions underground where pitiless Hel holds sway. In a kingdom of fog down a horrible depth lives Hel, the restless goddess of Death. Loki, whose heart is Malice, is her father, and Hel's sisters are the terrible wolf Fenrir, and the great earth-encircling serpent.

Hel sits on a throne of skulls and bones. Her face is loathsome with corruption like a corpse. Her plate is Hunger; her knife Greed; Misery her hall; Silence her threshold; her bed is Wasting; her bed-hangings men call Pest; Sloth is her handmaiden. Foul and black is her habitation, noisome with slime and death-dews; the pillars of her house are serpents' bones; a river trails through the hall, thick and sluggish with its load of rotten dead. Nidhoggr sits on the banks sucking the corpses of murderers.

Odin came along the path which no living foot has trod. The death-hound howled; but he saw the king of gods and men, and slunk back to his lair. Odin looked down through rolling fogs that came up from the halls of Hel, and dimly he saw the pale Death-kingdom. Behold, there was a table newly spread, a cup fresh filled with mead, and a golden bed made ready; but no man sat at the table, nor drank of the cup, nor lay upon the bed. Then Odin came to the grey stones beneath which the Norns lie sleeping. He sprinkled sand on one of the stones, and with his sword-point wrote in the sand three times the Runic words which wake the dead. The Norn awaking, spake from beneath the hollow stone: 'What would you? I am weary; let me sleep.' Odin said, 'In Hel's pale palace, lo, I see a bed made ready, a table spread, and mead outpoured. Say, for whom are these things prepared?' The Norn answered, 'Baldur will sit at the table; Baldur will drink of the cup; Baldur will lie in the golden bed. I am weary; let me sleep.'

Swiftly sped Odin back to Valhalla, his glorious palace, built of shining spears and roofed with golden shields. Heavy-hearted sat Allfather in his radiant hall; and the Æsir made lamentation with him because it was written that Baldur should die. Then Baldur's mother, the Queen Frigga, thought of a plan. She said, 'Let us take an oath of all things in heaven and earth that they will not harm Baldur.' And all the Æsir said, 'This is well spoken.'

Then the gods sware 'We will do Baldur no hurt.' Spear, and sword, and arrow, axe and javelin, every manner of weapon whereof the pattern is in Valhalla, clanged against his fellow, saying, 'We will do Baldur no hurt.' Sun, moon, and stars, as they rolled, sang, 'We will do Baldur no hurt.' The clouds sware it, and all that is in them; lightning, and rain, and ice, and tempest, and the howling winds. Sickness, Plague, and Famine came forth from their lurking places, and said with one accord, 'We will do Baldur no hurt.' The Night sware it, and the shadows, and the dews and mists; the Fire leaped up to take the oath.

Frigga, goddess of the earth, came down to her kingdom, and prayed all things to do her son no harm. The multitudes of people cried with one glad voice, 'We will do Baldur no hurt.' Then the sea and all that is therein sware it; the air and every fowl and insect that moveth above the earth. The earth and all things underground murmured, 'We will do Baldur no hurt.' Every beast and creeping thing that goeth on the earth, all trees and herbs that spring from the ground, made a covenant with Frigga, saying, 'We will do Baldur no hurt.'

Neither was there anything in heaven above nor in the earth beneath which took not the oath, save only a little spray of mistletoe which had no root on the ground but grew upon an aged oak and sapped the life out of the tree.

Happy was Frigga; happy Allfather. The gods made merry and rejoiced. And after that Baldur would stand among them for sport, whilst they flung spears and javelins at his body, or smote at him with swords. No weapon harmed him; neither point nor edge would so much as scratch his skin, because of the oath which all things had taken to do Baldur no hurt. So the livelong day Baldur's ringing laugh sounded through the halls of Asgard, whilst he played among the gods and caught their spears and arrows in his naked hands.

But Loki was envious of Baldur. Loki has no pleasure unless he can bring sorrow to the hearts of gods and men. Loki found out that the mistletoe alone, of all things in heaven and earth, had not taken the oath; and he hasted and cut it down, and made an arrow of the twig, and pointed it very sharp. Then came Loki to the wood of Glasir, outside Valhalla, where the Æsir were shooting at Baldur.

Hoder, the blind god, stood apart from the rest, laughing to hear the merriment, but took no part in the games—how should he, being blind?

Loki came to Hoder, saying, 'Come, join the sports. You will know where Baldur is by the sound of his laugh. Take this arrow. Fling it; and show that a blind god can do as well as the rest.' Hoder took the arrow from his hand and flung it at Baldur with a merry laugh.

Baldur fell dead; pierced to the heart. The blue faded from his eyes, and his radiant body grew pale and cold. Quick the Æsir gathered round their favourite. Nanna was there, and Frigga, calling on his name. But Baldur was far away in the dusky kingdom of Hel, sitting at the golden table, and drinking the mead from the golden cup before lying down upon the golden bed. Sharp was the sorrow of the gods, and bitter the sound of their wailing in Valhalla. 'Baldur is dead. Dead! Baldur the Beautiful is dead—is dead!' All things on earth made lamentation, saying, 'Baldur is dead! Dead! Baldur the Beautiful is dead—is dead!'

Loki could not be found. Not even the anger and grief of Odin Allfather could find him. Blind Hoder wept bitterly, because Baldur was very dear to him.

They bore Baldur's body to his good ship Ringhorne that lay beached upon the margin of the sea. But for all they are so strong, the Æsir could not push the ship into the water, it was so heavy. Then they called Firesmoke the giantess, who came riding on a wolf with a bridle of serpents. She, by her great strength, pushed the ship into the water: so swiftly it ran down the beach that the rollers caught fire as it rushed into the sea with a mighty noise. Thor was angry at the fire and smoke, since it is his alone to shake the earth with thunder and lighten from the sky; and with his hammer he would have slain the giantess, only the other gods besought him, and he spared her.

Then they made a pile upon the ship's deck, and laid Baldur thereupon. With his own hand Odin took the torch and lighted up the fire, and when the flames leaped high and wreathed round Baldur's body, Odin cast his ring Dröpnir therein, and sent the vessel sailing on the sea; whilst all the Æsir cried, 'Baldur is dead!—dead! Baldur the Beautiful is dead!—is dead!' But the gentle Nanna wept not: Nanna mourned not for Baldur. She was with him. Grief had killed her.

Odin sent down to Hel in her cold kingdom underground, 'What ransom wilt thou take, and give me back my bright and radiant boy?' Hel answered, 'Treasures are naught to me; I will have tears. Is Baldur verily so dear to gods and men? Let all things weep for him, and I will give him back; but I will first have tears from everything in earth and heaven.'

So the command went forth. 'Let all things weep for Baldur.' The winds wailed; the clouds wept; the stars hid their faces; sun and moon grew wan and pale; dews rose from the earth; every tree and flower bowed its head; tears stood upon each blade of grass; the birds ceased their songs; the wide sea moaned on every shore. There was nothing on earth which did not weep for Baldur.

In Asgard there was mourning and lamentation among the gods. Was there anything that mourned not for Baldur? Loki was not in Asgard. Loki was not to be found. But far apart there sat a grey old woman, nursing her knees, who sat and munched, and muttered the while :—'Baldur gladdened me never in life—I will not weep for Baldur.' Peradventure that old crone was Loki in disguise. That is why Baldur comes not back.

But will he never return to brighten earth and heaven? It is written that Baldur shall not always dwell beneath the ground. His radiance shall break out from Hel's dark prison-house, and burst through lock and bolt and bar. The sky will know when Baldur is coming, and will shine again as in the olden days when he sped across it on his swift white horse. The earth will know, and for gladness flowers will spring up from the ground; the trees will lift their heads and blossom, and all the birds of the air shall sing; yea, everything shall make music and be glad when Baldur the Beautiful comes back.

That was how Hilding taught them of the Death of Summer time. When it thundered he would say, 'Hark, that is the rumbling of Thor's chariot wheels over the clouds!' And when it lightened, 'See how his hammer flashes across the sky! He is flinging at the Trolls.' So Hilding joined earth and heaven in their minds, and showed them the parables of trees and hills and clouds.

What wonder that, as they grew in years, great love sprang up between the two? What wonder if they saw the beauty of the gods within each other's eyes? Frithjof was Ingebjorg's Baldur; she, his soft-eyed Nanna. And when Frithjof would tell Ingebjorg that she would be his wife some day, it made her glad: in truth she wished no better lot.

But Hilding when he knew of this was sorry and said: 'O Frithjof, root out this love from thy heart before it grow up and bear thorns. Thou art a bondsman's son. Ingebjorg is daughter of King Belé, whose generation springeth from the gods.'

Frithjof answered, 'Hast thou not taught me that before the

gods a man is what he is, not what his fathers were? Do not the gods deny their own offspring if they prove unworthy, and take instead to sit with them in Valhalla the noble-minded and the fierce in war?'

But Hilding only bade him think no more of his love, for that evil would certainly come of it.

King Belé waxed old and feeble. One day as he sat in his palace he leaned on the hand of his friend, the grey old thane Thorsten. And the king said, 'Good friend, our life-day is far spent, and the night draws on. The steel helmet presses heavily on my weary head; the mead has lost its flavour. It is time to rest. But through the darkness we will muse upon the brightness of the gods—so shall our thoughts be like stars to cheer the night, until the day breaks on the golden splendour of Valhalla. Summon hither my sons, and with them thy son Frithjof, that I may bless them while I have strength, and bid them hold together as we have done.'

Thither came the king's sons, Helgi and Halfdan to the palace; Frithjof was with them. Dark and gloomy was the countenance of Helgi: he came from communion with the priests; blood fresh upon his hands from the noontide sacrifice. Halfdan, the younger, bright as sunshine, had the face and form of some fair wilful girl who had girt on sword and ringmail for a merry jest. Frithjof stood a head above them both, and nobler, as the noon is twixt the night and day.

King Belé said: 'When I am gone I would have you three dwell in one mind. As the spear-ring bindeth the spear-shaft together, so fellowship shall make you strong. Let the sword-point guard your borders, but cover ye the kingdom with the shield. In the people is the strength of a king. He is a fool that oppresseth them; the tree withers when the roots lack nourishment. There be four pillars which do carry the heavens, but only one pillar supporteth the throne of a king. Law is its name; and that king which doeth his own will instead of the law, pulleth down the seat whereon he sitteth. Son Helgi, be strong, but forget not mercy. Mercy adorneth might as a flower is an ornament to a brazen shield. The mighty should be tender; the best blade bendeth most. Trust not to auguries; the signs in the altar-victim may deceive, but never the Runes that Odin writes upon an honest heart. Get trusty friends; they are to a man like bark to a tree, to shelter the heart in the evil day of winter storm. Boast never of thy sires. What profiteth a

mighty bow to him that cannot bend it to send forth the arrow! Every river rolleth to the sea on his own waves. Halfdan, thou art bright and pleasant; but the sweetest honey without hops will make no mead. Let thy sword-hilt glisten with gems, if so thou hast the mind, but when thou drawest it let all men know that the blade is steel. Get knowledge; fools are many, wise men few. Remember folk will come to thy feasts because thou art a king's son; they will eat thy dainty meats and drink thy mead; but if a fool sitteth at the head of the table, they will turn and listen to a wise man in a lowly seat. Choose not too many friends; only an empty house is open to everybody.'

Thorsten likewise spake to Frithjof: 'My son, honour the gods. Though their dwelling-place is in Disirsaal, they see everywhere, even into the hearts of men. As the flowers are gladdened when they look up to the sun, so is a man's heart when he thinketh of the gods. Honour the king: it is needful that there should be one master in a kingdom; the bright day hath one sun, but the darksome night hath many stars. The people is the kingdom's sword against the enemy: one man may take the sword by the hilt, but many grasping it by the blade shall wound themselves. Son, thou art strong, and strength is the gift of the gods. Nevertheless, be not proud of thy strength: for a bear hath the strength of twelve men, yet one man taketh him. Many a one that stilteth himself up with pride, cometh down to walk on crutches. Death is sure to every man: his might faileth and his strength dieth with him, but his fame liveth after he is gone, and sweet is the savour of good deeds.'

Then after the two old friends, king and thane, had counselled their children, they gave commandment to be laid side by side in two mounds on the seashore, where the murmur of the waves might hush them in their sleep. And it came to pass soon after that they closed their eyes and died. Never, all his life, had King Belé faced fight without the trusty Thorsten at his right hand; and even in death the thane went with him down to Hel's dark kingdom.

They which go by the mounds to this day hear oftentimes strange murmurings like far-off voices. Some say that it is nothing but the wash of the sea upon the beach, or the wind blowing through the crisp brown grasses on the cliffs; others lift a finger and say, 'Listen, King Belé and his faithful thane are whispering in their sleep!'

Then Helgi and Halfdan began to reign in Norroway, ruling the kingdom between them.

But Frithjof went away to take possession of his inheritance of Framnäs: three miles of farm and pasture bordered by the sea. Birchwoods crowned the heights: on the slopes waved yellow barley and rye, tall as a man; sleek herds browsed in the lush green meadows; on the plains the woolly sheep slow drifted, white as the cloud-flocks in the sky; the lakes were full of fish, the forests of broad-antlered elk. Twelve pair of chargers, bridled storm-winds, champed impatient in their stalls; their manes knotted with scarlet, their hoofs bright with iron. The mead-hall, built of pine, would seat six hundred men. Holm oak benches and tables were ranged round against the walls. A black, glossy bearskin, with a mouth of scarlet, and silver claws, lay thrown across the chief seat at the end, where Thorsten had been wont to sit; and on either side were carven in elm the images of Odin, All-ruler, and Frig the god of rain and sunshine. In the midst of the hall was a hearth of polished stone, whereon was always a merry blaze, sweet-scented of the resinous pine-wood, and above it a great chimney, so wide that at night one might look up and see the stars twinkle. Against the walls hung suits of mail and arms enough to furnish a host of men; well filled were the cellars with good ale and mead, and the chests in the store-rooms were heavy with booty.

But greater riches had Frithjof than these, for he inherited three far-famed treasures.

The first was Angurvadel, bright as the northern light, the wondrous sword made by the dwarfs, the hilt whereof was gold, and on whose blade were written mystic Runes which none might read. In time of peace the Runes grew dull and pale, but in the battle-day they blazed forth red as blood and fierce as fire.

Next was a golden arm-ring, wrought about the hoop with pictures of the gods, and in the midst a glittering ruby. Lame Wayland the smith made it for the first of Thorsten's race. But a Viking named Soté stole it from Thorsten, and taking ship hasted to Britain. Thither Thorsten pursued him, King Belé also bearing him company. On the rocky shore they found a cavern wherein was a mighty tomb. Thorsten and Belé looked in and saw a fearful vision of the black ship of the Viking, that moved and shimmered like to flame. Upon the vessel's mast, in a robe of fire, sat a skeleton scouring a sword-blade to get the blood-stains out, but all in vain; and on his arm of bone there shone the bracelet. Then they knew that Soté was dead, and that this was his spirit: and King Belé said, 'Let us both go in;' but Thorsten answered, 'Nay, shame it were for two to fight with

one.' Then went he in. King Belé listened and heard the clash of swords, and horrible wailings which cannot be uttered. Then came a long and fearful cry; then silence. Thorsten came running out, white as a stone, with cold dews upon his face: but the ring was on his arm. What had happened King Belé never knew, and Thorsten would not tell. Once only the thane spake of it, and said; 'Would rather I had died than bought the ring so dear.'

The third great treasure was the ship Ellide. It was in likeness of a dragon, with golden head and open jaws at the prow; the belly thereof was scaled with blue and gold; and it ended at the stern with a twisted tail of silver. The planks of the ship were not joined by the shipwright, but had grown together. It had black sails, bordered curiously with red, like to a dragon's wings; and when they were outspread the ship flew over the calmest sea as though before a storm. One of Thorsten's forefathers, when out at sea, picked off a sinking wreck an old man with green tangled locks like seaweed, and brought him home, warmed him at his fire, and gave him mead. Not knowing who he was, he would have sheltered him through the night; but the old man said that it was time to be away at sea, and vanished, none knew whither. That was the great god Ægir, the sea-ruler: he sent the ship for a present for befriending him.

Those were the treasures of Frithjof.

Frithjof came to the mead-hall to the funeral feast. Twelve champions sate round his board. At his right hand was the fair-haired Björn, bright as a flower among withered leaves. There in the wine-cup, Frithjof and Björn sware fellowship for life. Then silently all drained the mead-horn to the memory of good Thane Thorsten. The Skalds came in and sang the praises of the dead.

Helgi and Halfdan sate in judgment by the gravemound of their father. To them came Frithjof, sailing across the sea in Ellide his dragon-ship, Björn and his companions with him. Lightly stepped Frithjof from the ship, and coming into the circle of men thus spake: 'King Helgi and King Halfdan, are we friends, even as our fathers were? I crave a boon of you. I am not of kingly race as ye are, and might have waited till with my strong hand I had won a kingdom for myself, made myself your equal, and then, with a crown of red gold on my head, come and proffered my request. But love of the land and the throne is strong in me, and I would rather stay and fight for Norroway, to keep her kings in safety on the throne, and her peasants secure

within their homesteads. Wherefore I pray you give me Ingebjorg to wife. Have we not grown together from childhood, till love has made us part and parcel of each other? Surely King Belé willed it so in training us together. Here, by his mound I ask it: beneath the earth he hears me: let it be according as he willed.'

Helgi's face grew dark, and with a sneer he answered: 'The thane's son, bred upon my father's alms, would seek to mate with Odin's line! Bounty is wasted on a bondsman. Raise a peasant from the dunghill, and he will want to elbow thee from off the throne. Kind it is of thee to offer to guard my people and my land. Know that the king is the people's shield. Cease from presumption, and perchance, for my father's sake and the odd liking he bare to thine, I may find room for thee among my hired servants.'

Frithjof laughed bitterly, and to his sword cried, 'Wake, Angurvadel!' The good blade leaped from the scabbard, blood-red its runes. But Frithjof said, 'Helgi, I cannot smite thy black heart from its bone-house; thou art son of my father's friend.' Then went he to a tree where Helgi's shield of gold and brass hung upon a bough, and at one blow of his sword cleft it in twain. 'That was well struck, good Angurvadel: back to thy scabbard and dream of war till I awake thee next.' Then whilst Helgi and his men stood silent, cowering for fear, Frithjof cried scornfully, 'Birth! Lineage! He says we are not equal! Look at the sons of Odin's line, trembling before the thane!' Angry he gat him to his dragon-ship, and crossed the sea-ways home.

Far away north dwelt old King Ring, gentle as Baldur, wise as Mimir. His people loved his silver hairs; his ear was ever open to their cry; the wronged he righted, the distressed he comforted. No war-ships anchored in his bays, but merchant-ships came thither from all lands to barter. No war-steeds trampled down the standing corn on the peasant's land. Ring dwelt in peace, the father of his people. From every home prayers went up continually to Odin for his welfare. But King Ring's wife was dead, and he had mourned her long, till, being desolate, and his folk urging him, he looked to find a mother for his dead wife's child, and a queen for the comfort of his people. And hearing the fame of Ingebjorg, who men said was gentle as she was fair, the king sent messengers with costly presents to woo her from her brothers.

But King Helgi spake austerely to the messengers, and bade them wait three days for an answer, whilst he sought auguries

from the entrails of falcons and horses new-killed upon the altar-stone. On the fourth day Helgi returned from communing with the priests, and said to the messengers, 'Many victims have we slain to learn the will of the gods, and the augury of them all is, Nay. King Ring must be a man of evil heart: he is displeasing to the gods: I have no will but theirs.' Halfdan said merrily, 'Tell old Greybeard to come himself, and see how quickly we will help him on his horse again.' And with that they turned and left the messengers without so much as a farewell or a courtesy.

So the messengers returned to their king and told him how they were treated. King Ring pushed back his golden seat and stood upright. He said, 'Old Greybeard *will* go himself.' Then strode he to the courtyard, and smote upon the great brazen war-shield of the land that rusted there upon a lime-tree. Quick gathered he his warriors, and filled the bay with war-ships, numberless and terrible.

Helgi was afraid and knew not what to do when he learned that King Ring was coming to fight him. But he took Ingebjorg and shut her up in the temple of Baldur for safety; for Baldur's temple is safe against unhallowed feet amongst all Northmen. Moreover, Helgi prevailed upon old Hilding to go and intercede for him with Frithjof and to persuade him to come and help them against King Ring.

Hilding found Frithjof playing chess with Björn, at a board with gold and silver squares. Frithjof greeted his old tutor gladly, but would not listen to his message: he poured out a horn of mead and bade him refresh himself whilst they finished the game.

Then Hilding said, 'O Frithjof, cease to be angry with Helgi and Halfdan. Haste to help them, for King Ring cometh with all his men to fight against us.'

Frithjof made as though he heard not. 'Björn, here is check to the king. Will you save it with the pawn? But what is a pawn, a paltry pawn, that it should save the king?'

Hilding, well knowing for whom the speech was meant, said, 'My son, be not high-minded: Helgi and Halfdan may be weak against King Ring, but against thee they are strong enough to lay waste thy house and take thy land.'

Frithjof laughed: 'So Björn, you would have my castle? Well, I have guarded it with my knights; so try your worst.'

Hilding said, 'Leave the game, Frithjof, for the game of war. Behold Ingebjorg weeps day and night in Baldur's grove. Let her tears intercede with you.'

Frithjof cried, 'Björn! Björn! would you take my queen away? But the queen shall be saved!'

Frithjof left his game and stood up, and took Hilding by the hand. 'You have heard my answer. Go, tell Helgi, "The king is the people's shield," and I will not be his thane.'

Hilding answered, 'Son, I have done my duty; but I blame thee not.'

At sunset Frithjof led Björn to the beach where Ellide, his dragon-ship, pulled impatient at her cable. They got into the ship. 'Whither goest thou?' asked Björn. 'To Ingebjorg,' he said.

'What! To profane the grove of Baldur?'

Frithjof answered, 'I care not, and I dare. I must see Ingebjorg. I will see Ingebjorg. Friend Björn, the gods see everywhere. Baldur knows that my heart is clean of ill-intent. An honest heart defiles no temple. I will go.'

Baldur's grove was bounded by a wall which reached the sea. No man might enter that holy place on pain of death, save after sacrifice and purification by the priests. Frithjof heeded not: he climbed the steep wall by the sea, and came to Ingebjorg, who trembled for fear because he had profaned the grove. 'Fear not, dear Ingebjorg, but come, let us seek Baldur's pardon, and Baldur's blessing on our love.' Together they walked through the silent grove, and came into the temple and bowed themselves before the altar of the god. When they arose a calm fell upon Frithjof's mind. Ingebjorg said, 'Dear Frithjof, they who worship here, being sanctified, may listen to the promptings of their hearts, for Baldur from his altar sheddeth peace. What wouldst thou do?' Frithjof answered, 'My anger against thy brethren is turned away. I will do all to make the peace save give thee up. I will go to Helgi in presence of all the people, will give my hand to him in friendship, and ask him to forget the past, to give thee to me, and to take the faithful service of my life.' Ingebjorg kissed him, saying, 'Go; they are Baldur's words and mine.' So he went upon the errand.

Three days passed by; then Frithjof climbed the wall again, and came into the grove to Ingebjorg. Pale and cast-down he came. She saw the answer in his face, yet asked him, 'It has failed?'

He answered, 'It has failed. Hear what I have borne with a patient and a steadfast mind. I came to them as they sate by the mounds; thousands were with them, taking counsel about the war. Meekly I said to Helgi, "O king, I have been hasty

and impatient, and maybe have presumed too much. Let all the past be past. The enemy is near. Let us be friends. What do I seek? I ask thee to make thy sister happy and our land strong against the foe. Give me Ingebjorg, and bid me fight against this Ring or any man. By Thor! you shall see how strong my arm is." All the people urged him, saying, "Give him thy sister, for there is no better mate for her in all the Northland." Then spake old Hilding long and wisely, urging him, and even Halfdan thy brother, sitting at his side, turned round and likewise spake for me. But Helgi sat listening to their words and mine as a stone upon the altar listens to the pleadings of a victim. He would not take my hand, nor yet refuse it, but sat still as an image. There was silence. He cannot speak without a sneer: he said, "I am well-nigh minded to make friends. Forced by sore need to buy my friendship dear, I would be fain to give my sister to a thrall's son; but never to him that has profaned the sanctuary. Perchance it is not true; yet I have heard how one brake into Baldur's temple, and defiled his holy grove. Is this so? Answer me—was it thou?" Up rose the people's cry, "It is not true! Frithjof has not done this abominable thing!" My Ingebjorg, it was hard to answer; to turn the people's clamour in my cause to hate; to lose thee, almost won. But I never thought to lie. I answered, "Unbidden I climbed into Baldur's grove, since Ingebjorg was there. Where she is I will go, in Asgard or in Hel, and neither man nor god shall keep me back. Yet hearken; I defiled not the temple of the god; judge ye, for lo I entered it burning with hate—peace fell on me there, and thence, straightway, I came to thee with gentle words which Baldur put into my mind." Then I became accursed in men's sight, and folk drew back and shunned me like a leper. No longer any raised his voice for me. Helgi said, "Death is the penalty, but my judgment shall be as gentle as the god whose temple you have polluted. Away in the western islands dwelleth Yarl Angantyr, who paid us tribute till King Belé died; now he holdeth fast his gold. Men say he sleeps upon it as the dragon Fafnir did upon the treasure. Go, wrest the tribute from him. If you bring it, well; if not, return no more." Such, Ingebjorg, is my sentence. Men think it just and merciful. Ellide swims at anchor yonder, and I go.'

'And leave me, Frithjof?'

'Nay, sweet one, nay, I will take thee with me. Come, where none shall point the finger at thy mate, and say, "Profane!" and shudder and turn aside. See, Ellide spreads her wings all eager

for the sea. Come to Yarl Angantyr's islands. He was my father's friend, though Helgi knows it not, and he will welcome us.'

'And wouldst thou break thy word and not bring back the tribute?'

'Never fear but we will send Helgi back his dross, and be for ever free of him. Come!'

'O Frithjof, I was to blame. My heart goes with thee, but I cannot come. Helgi is in my father's place. I dare not disobey him. It is theft to steal the happiness forbidden; not less so when it hangs within our reach, but only harder to refrain from plucking it.'

'Hast thou no other word for me?'

'Go, Frithjof, alone. I will not have men say of thee, he lurked about and stole his wife and fled lest he should face her brother.'

Heavily turned Frithjof away. 'Proud daughter of a king, I go alone: farewell.'

'Proud? Aye proud; but only proud of thee, dear Frithjof.' She came and leaned upon his breast and covered him with kisses. 'Do I not love thee, Frithjof, that thou wouldst go away without a kiss, whilst I shall sit and weep till thy return? Go, with a brave, strong heart, and trust in me.'

Then Frithjof felt that she was right, and he kissed her and drew forth the armlet of Soté and set it for a pledge upon her arm. So they parted; and he gat him to his dragon-ship and sailed away.

When Frithjof had been many days at sea, the wind blew cold, the hoar-frost whitened deck and spars, the rigging grew stiff with ice, and the oarsmen's hands were numbed with cold. The clouds piled black and brooded down; the sea, moved from its depths, rolled in great tossing hills, and seethed and roared. Furious the storm-waves leaped upon Ellide to swamp her. The good ship quivered with the blows, and lurching, shook herself, then fearless swooped down the yawning water-valleys, and darted up the green sea-hills. Afar they saw the storm-fiends riding on a whale; one like a white bear, the other the great storm-eagle, fanning the tempest with her huge black wings. They are the sea-witches Heyd and Ham; and it was Helgi who sent them to raise this storm to swallow up his enemy. Then Frithjof took the tiller in hand and steered straight on the fiends. 'Help me, brave Ellide; show thyself the sea-god's gift. On, on, with all thy speed.' And when the good ship heard her master's voice,

all her deck-planks creaked as she flew on and smote the whale with her bow so mightily that he sank into the depths; and the storm-fiends were left tossing on the water, till the sea-weed tangled them and the storm went down. The sun shone out, the sea grew calm and blue, and Frithjof anchored off the island where Angantyr dwelt.

Yarl Angantyr was feasting in his castle. He looked out of his window and said, 'That is Thane Thorsten's dragon-ship Ellide.' Then arose Atli, fiercest of his Vikings, and said, 'If this be Frithjof, I will know if there be a spell in his sword as men have said.' The battle-madness came on Atli as he went forth to fight.

Frithjof had landed with twelve of his men. They had brought food and kindled a fire, and being very tired, sate them down on the beach to eat their meal. Atli came haughtily, and called with a loud voice, 'Choose! Fight, flee, or yield!'

Frithjof answered, 'We are men already wearied with fighting the sea; but we will neither flee nor yield.' With that they fell to and fought, till Frithjof, with Angurvadel, cut Atli's sword in twain.

'There is witchery in thy sword,' cried Atli.

Frithjof said, 'Try my hands then,' and flung away his sword and wrestled with the Viking. Back he bent the big man like a reed, and held him arched upon a balance, till he overcame his quivering sinews and flung Atli heavily upon his shoulders.

Kneeling on his enemy's breast, Frithjof said, 'Had I now my sword I would still that tongue of thine, that it should no more boast itself against tired men.'

'Fetch it. I will not stir. Valhalla for the brave! for you to-morrow, for me to-day.' So spake the Viking.

Frithjof fetched his sword, but Atli quailed not. He drew the blade, and the fierce runes shone red; the Viking stirred not, but with a quiet eye awaited death. Frithjof put back his sword into its sheath, and taking Atli by the hand, said, 'Man, arise; thou art too brave to die: let us be friends.' So they went together to Angantyr's castle.

Frithjof marvelled at the richness of the mead-hall. The walls were hung with gilded leather curiously wrought with flowers. The hearth was marble. White tapers in silver candlesticks shone everywhere like stars. There was glass in the windows of many colours: the doors had locks. In the chief seat, on a chair of silver, sat Yarl Angantyr, clad in armour of gold and steel From his shoulders fell a purple robe sprinkled with silver

stars. The meats were served in silver dishes. Many warriors sate round the board, and when Frithjof entered all rose and hailed him, and having drained the mead-horn to his honour, led him to a seat on Yarl Angantyr's right hand.

The Yarl said, 'Son of Thorsten my old friend, thou art welcome.' Then Frithjof told his story, and wherefore he had come; told of his love for Ingebjorg, and the sentence laid on him by Helgi.

Angantyr answered, 'Never yet paid I tribute to any man, but I gave King Belé of Norroway many gifts for friendship's sake. As to his sons, I know them not; and for tribute, bid them first unlock my coffers with their swords. But I will give a gift to thee for Thorsten's sake. I loved him, and his son is dear to me' Then he called for a purse, and his daughter fetched one which she had broidered with needlework and precious stones. On it was the likeness of a castle in a forest, with golden beasts among the trees, and it was fringed with pearls. Angantyr filled the purse to the brim with gold, and gave it to Frithjof, saying, 'Take it: it is thine: a gift of welcome to my friend. Do with it as thou wilt. Only abide with us for a while.' So the good-hearted Yarl persuaded him to tarry on from day to day, till whilst he lingered winter passed and springtime came. Then, longing for his home and Ingebjorg, Frithjof pushed Ellide into the sea and stood for the Northland.

Seven days he sailed the sea; then looking out afar he saw the land; a long blue line of cliff and hill, soft as a cloud betwixt the earth and sky. His heart beat fast, for he was nearing home; and as the blue waxed grey he strove to make out Framnäs, the dwelling of his fathers—looked for its birch-crowned heights, its mellow fields dotted with flocks and herds. But as he looked the view faded; a mist came over the sun and dwelt on sea and land. So he ran Ellide to shore, and coasted till he reached the well-known creek and heard the waterfall leap down the hills of his home to the sea. He beached the ship, and with a glad heart set foot on the misty shore, and took the path up by the cliffs.

His homestead gate was gone. His home was gone. There was a wild and a waste where Framnäs was. He trode on ashes everywhere. Black ashes heaped on scorched grass: trees cindered into black stumps of arms where they stood: ruin and blackness—that was Framnäs. And in the midst a heap of charred timber, and stone cracked and powdered white with fire—that was his mead-hall. His favourite hound, half starved,

crept up and licked his hand. His horse came neighing for som corn and thrust his nose against his master's fingers.

That was Frithjof's welcome home.

There had been a great battle with King Ring. Halfda fought bravely, but was beaten; Helgi took flight, and as h fled fired Framnäs betwixt him and his pursuers to keep ther back. Then Belé's sons had begged for peace. Ring bade ther choose whether they would give up the land or give him Ingi bjorg to wife. They had given up their sister. King Ring ha wedded her and taken her away.

Old Hilding told him: Hilding that would not lie. He saic 'I saw her wed. They set her on a black horse; she, white a a ghost upon a thunder cloud; and led her to Baldur's temple There she fell down and made her prayer to Baldur so pitifully that all which heard her wept. She alone wept not. But I— I know. Often by night when she has deemed herself alone, have heard her walk and weep, and call upon thy name, an wrestle with her grief. The stricken sea-mew dives that non may see her bleed. She said, "Baldur hath brought all this t pass because we profaned his temple." "Heaven pity *him*," sh said; "for he will live, but I shall fade and die." Yes. I sa them wed; and when the Skalds had done their songs, Helg caught sight of your armlet on her cold white arm. With a oath he snatched it from her and set it on the arm of Baldur statue. Straightway I drew my sword: fury made me strong I could have cut him down in the temple where he stood. Bu she laid a finger on my hand, and whispered, "Good frien forbear: Allfather sees and knows; leave judgment unto him."'

Frithjof said fiercely, 'Allfather judgeth by the hand of ma The gods put vengeance in our hearts to do their will. Bewa of me; I am harmful to friend and foe: henceforth I am firebrand on the earth.' So the berserk madness fell on Frithjo

In Baldur's temple they kept the feast of the longest da Though it was midnight, the sun lay dusky-red upon the mou tains. A ruddy twilight glimmered through the grove; with the temple the pine-fire crackled on the hearth. Priests in whi bearskin robes stirred the wood-pile, and made the sparks f up. King Helgi in his royal robes stood sacrificing before t altar. Suddenly there was a noise at the temple-gate, and sound of voices.

'Björn, keep the door; let no man pass alive!'

Frithjof and his men pushed their way through priests a people to the altar.

Then cried Frithjof 'Helgi, I have done your bidding: I have brought the tribute; but I will first be requited of you. You have robbed me of home and wife; and now, before Allfather, you shall answer for it. Nay, seek not to skulk away; I have tracked the rat to his hiding place and stopped his hole. Here, by the light of Baldur's flames, uncovered by shield, we will fight together with sword, or knife, or hand-gripe.'

In terror at his fierceness Helgi slank down against the altar and cowered upon the altar-steps.

Frithjof cried, 'Pitiful coward, my sword despises thee!' He took the heavy purse of tribute money, flung it full in Helgi's face, and stunned him there, saying, 'Take thy tribute!' and spurned him with his foot. Then to the threatening priests, 'Put up your sacrificial knives, you wool-clad mob; lest our thirsty swords mistake you for the victims, us for priests.'

Then perceived he the armlet upon Baldur's arm, and he said, 'By your good leave, dear god, lame Wayland forged it not for thee. That ring is Ingebjorg's and I will have it!' Fast was the ring upon the arm; but Frithjof pulled and plucked until he tare it off; when lo! with his violence the statue fell into the fire. The fire leaped up and lapped it in its arms; the flames rose high and licked the rafters of the roof, until the temple was ablaze and the gold plates of the ceiling melted and dripped gold upon the floor. In vain they made a chain of men to the sea, and passed buckets of water hand to hand to Frithjof mounted on the roof. The flames would not be quenched. A wind arose and the grove took fire; dry with the summer heat, bough kindled bough, and when the morning brake, grove and temple were a smouldering heap of ashes.

Frithjof in horror gat him to his ship, and put to sea. He saw the smoke go up to Odin to accuse him, and he said, 'There is no hope for me, and no forgiveness for my sin. A wanderer will I be. The sea is free. There will I dwell. I have no home; but thou, my grim dragon, henceforth shalt be my Framnäs; no wife—be thou, my black-winged Ellide, my bride.'

Then came Björn and touched him while he mused. 'See yonder! Helgi with ten war-ships gives us chase.' Quick he forgat his sorrow, and put the ship about, and made ready his men for fight. But Björn was very cool; while the rest shouted the battle-cry and clanged their weapons, he sat still upon the oar-bank watching. Presently the ten ships sank like stones, and all on board were drowned save Helgi, who contrived to swim ashore. And when Frithjof and his men marvelled greatly, Björn

laughed aloud; he said, 'I bored holes in them last night. Ho! Ho!'

Thenceforth Frithjof and his men became Vikings and roved the seas. Very strict were the laws which he made for his champions. No man might take shelter from storm or sun, by night or day. The deck was the Viking's bed, a shield his pillow, the sky his coverlid. His sword must be short to bring him near his enemy. The Viking never furls sail in a storm: the hurricane carries him the way he would go; the force of the storm helps the arms of the rower. He shall protect merchant ships, but they shall pay him tribute; the merchantman is a slave to gain, but the Viking's steel is worth as much as his gold. Booty shall be shared by lot without murmuring; all shall share it alike, save their chief; for him the glory alone sufficeth. The Viking shall board the enemy's ship to fight; and he that yieldeth so much as a hair's breadth shall be thrust out of the company. The plea for mercy shall be heeded: he that giveth up his weapon is no more an enemy. No man shall dress his wounds until the fight be done; battle-scars are the ornaments of the Viking.

Three years fought Frithjof, unconquered through all seas, till victory cloyed on him and he grew sick of spoiling. A lonely man, the longing grew and strengthened in his mind—'If I might look upon her face again!' Fierce fighting lulled it for the time, but ever it came back strong and stronger. So at last he turned the good ship's head to Northland, and like an eagle, Ellide stretched her black wings and sped as though before a storm.

King Ring kept Yule-feast in his hall. The winter of old age had snowed his hairs, yet noble was his countenance. Beside him at the board sat Ingebjorg his queen, pale and drooping as a lily-flower. There was clamour in the hall from noisy warriors merry over the mead-cup, mingled with the sound of pipe and harp.

On the beggars' bench against the door there came and sat an old man bent with age, wrapped from head to foot in a tattered bearskin. He laid aside his staff and rested on the bench. A bluff old warrior, the bully of the board, now blustering in his cups, came up to jeer the beggarman for the others' sport. The beggar-man's eye kindled, and in a moment he took the warrior by the middle betwixt his hands, twirled him head over heels, and set him on his feet again.

Then said King Ring, 'By all the Gods, that is a strong old

man? Come hither, O stranger! Who art thou? Whence comest thou? What is thy name, thy country, and thine errand here?'

The old man answered, 'Sorrow nurtured me; want is mine inheritance; my last lodging was a wolf's den. Once I rode a winged dragon. For years I have ploughed green fields, yet left no furrow, reaped no crop but salt. Now in mine age I have journeyed far to hear thy wisdom, which is famed throughout the North.'

The king said, 'Thy grasp is strong; thy voice is clear. Thou art not old. Wherefore, throw off thy disguise that we may know our guest.'

Then Frithjof threw off his bearskin, and behold a young man, bright like Baldur, strong of limb like Thor, golden his hair as sunshine. From his shoulder a blue mantle fell; his coat was girded with a silver belt whereto a sword was slung; and on his arm were many rings of gold.

Did anyone know him? In the queen's cheeks the colour came and went like the red north-light flushing the snow-fields. But King Ring gave no sign.

There was a blast of horns, and serving-men bare in upon a lordly dish the wild boar on bended knees, served whole, and decked with garlands in Freyr's honour. And when the dish was set upon the table, King Ring laid his finger upon the boar's head and thus spake: 'Helgi and Halfdan have I conquered, and hereby I vow by Freyr, whose is this feast and offering, that Frithjof likewise I will overcome.'

Frithjof upstarted, wrathful and fierce. 'The man you speak of is my friend. I swear I will protect him with all I have and am!'

The king smiled gravely. 'Stranger, whoever thou art, I like the bold of speech. Be our guest through the winter. Nay, deny me not.' Then spake he to the queen to fill the cup of honour and bear to him.

Trembling she poured the yellow wine into the gold-ringed horn. Scarce could she bear the cup, her hand was shaking so that the mead was spilled upon the floor. Her eyes fastened on the pavement as she bare it, so the stranger should not see her face; but he saw the blushes coursing on her fair white arm. He took the cup and drained it at a draught. Long sate the warriors at their carouse, to the sound of merry music and the brave songs of the Skalds.

While Frithjof tarried with King Ring the sea froze hard; and

the king commanded swift horses to be yoked to his sledge, for he would go upon the ice-plain.

'Go not,' said Frithjof; 'for treacherous is the ice-bound sea; Ran, wife of the sea-g d, lurks beneath the brittle ice to drag men down.'

Ring answered not, but cried to his steeds, 'Away, and show yourselves of Sleipnir's breed!' So saying, he shook loose the reins, and away went the coursers athwart the ringing crust of ice. Then quickly Frithjof fastened his skates upon his feet and overtook the king's sledge and skated circles round about it, whilst for all the horses might do they could not so much as pass him. Suddenly brake the ice: sledge, steeds, and king went down into the sea. But Frithjof came to the hole, planted his skates firmly in the ice, and griping the horses by the manes, dragged sledge and all upon the ice again.

'Stranger, that was a brave hand-grip,' said the king; 'Frithjof himself could not have done better.' Frithjof laughed, for he deemed that the king knew him not.

While yet he tarried, springtime came. The birds made music in the new-leafed trees; loosed from their frost-bonds the brooks sang merrily down the valley-sides; and pink as Freya's cheek the rose brake from its coverlid. And as it befell, the king and queen would go a hunting. With them went a multitude of their people to join the sport. Frithjof went also. Like a star upon a fleecy cloud the queen seemed on the proud white horse that bare her. Her hunting-gown was green and gold, and in her hat blue feathers waved. Frigga, earth goddess—Rota, the bright-eyed battle-maid—was scarce more fair than she.

Now, in the midst of the hunting the king grew weary, and fell back from the rest with Frithjof only for company. Afar they heard the baying of the hounds, and the frightened game breaking through the wood; saw the falcons soar and dart for prey, and the herons swoop in their circles. And lagging still they came into a lonesome place, shut in three sides by trees, but on the fourth was a yawning chasm rent in the cliff—above, a mighty rock-side, and far down the narrow cleft uprose a steam and the faint noise of water plashing in the abyss.

For a while neither spake; but at the last King Ring gat off his horse and said, 'O stranger, I am weary; I would rest awhile.'

Quick answered Frithjof, 'Nay, rest not here. There is danger in this lonely place; I canno' stay with thee. We will hasten to the castle. There shalt thou rest.'

The King said, 'Not so; slumber cometh at the will of the gods, unlooked for, but when sought avoideth us.' So he prevailed on him, and Frithjof came down from off his horse, and sate under a beech-tree against the trunk; he spread his mantle on the ground, and the old king lay down. On Frithjof's lap he laid his head, and closed his eyes; gentle was his rest, as a child's upon his mother's knee, fearing no evil.

Frithjof looked on his quiet face and sat a thinking. This was the man that stood betwixt him and Ingebjorg. His fingers wandered scarce knowing to his sword-hilt, but feeling it they shrank away again.

There came two birds and sate in the tree, the one coal-black, the other white as snow. The black bird sang:—

> Quick! 'twill never be known nor seen,
> Kill the King and win the Queen;
> For she is thine with plighted kiss,
> And a man may take his own, I wis.

But the white bird sang:—

> Allfather sees, and he will know
> The man that slays a sleeping foe;
> Odin can make thy winning vain,
> Or turn thy patience into gain.

Then, fingering at his sword with trembling hand, he drew it forth and shuddering flung it from him. It turned glittering in the air, and dropped far off among the dark trees of the wood. Immediately the black bird fled down to Nastrond, the night kingdom; but lightly the snow-white bird unfolded her wings and soared up into the blue sky, making music in her flight, sweet as the sound of harpstrings.

And the old king awakened upon Frithjof's lap and said, 'Sweetly, O my friend, have I slumbered; for a pleasant thing it is to enter the shadow of sleep guarded by a brave man's blade. But where is thy sword? Where is Angurvadel, the lightning's brother?'

Frithjof answered, 'It availeth little; there are other swords in the Northland. But it is not well to commune always with Angurvadel. Sharp is its tongue; it thirsteth evermore for blood, for a dark spirit from Niflheim dwelleth in the steel. It hath no respect for slumber nor grey hairs.'

Then said the King, 'Frithjof, I know thee. When first thou didst cross my threshold I knew thee; yet I made as though I

knew thee not, for I had heard of Frithjof, called of men the Wolf, Frithjof which defiled the sanctuary, the strong-handed one that brake up shield and ship and temple when he willed. And I said I will know this man and prove him. Frithjof, I slept not; I put my life into thy hand to try thee. I know what came into thy mind. Friend, I have tried thee and thou art true. Yet one thing passeth my knowledge—how, being thus true and brave, thou couldst have stolen into my house in beggar's guise to rob me of my wife.'

Frithjof said, 'The gods well know I never came to rob thee of her—only to look upon her face. Had I the mind to have taken her, who should have hindered me? But I have my punishment to bear. Thou hast not wronged me. She pledged herself to me; she was mine; but Baldur took her from me for my sin and gave her to thee. For this same cause men shun me—call me Wolf of the sanctuary; the very children shrink away when I draw near; Baldur, the gentle god that loveth all things, hateth me, and hideth his face before the blackness of my sin. So I became a wanderer and ploughed the dreary sea. But the longing came on me to see her yet once more; I strove against it, yet I came—a beggar, to look on her sweet face—disguised so that none, not even she, might know me—then without word or sign to go back to the waste wide sea unto my banishment. Thou madest me throw off my beggar dress, and day by day didst urge me to remain, till, deeming myself unknown to all but her, and since my wish was stronger than my will, I yielded. I wronged thee not in word nor thought. But I have stayed too long. To-morrow I will go away, and thou shalt never see me more. Good Ellide! thou hast rested all too long. To-morrow thou shalt spread thy wings to the breeze, and bathe thy dusky bosom in the welcome sea. The thunderstorm, the roaring hurricane, and the battle-din shall be to me, henceforth, instead of any sweet voice of wife or child, until I die in fight and go up to Valhalla.'

Tearfully answered the grey old king: 'Dear friend, I blame thee not for loving her. Who that hath seen her can help loving her? I call to mind the fires of my youth, even though in my age the embers have grown cold. Go not away. Stay with us yet. I am old; my days are few; bear with me for a little while until I die; then shalt thou take the queen and all my kingdom for her dower.'

King Ring sat on the morrow upon his royal throne; Ingebjorg all white and trembling sat at his side, knowing what had come to pass. His warriors stood round about.

Haggard and worn came Frithjof into the hall. He had not slept.

He said, 'The livelong night I have thought and thought. It must not be. I cannot stay; I cannot look on her and love her not. I dare not stay; I dare not stay to break her peace. But I have brought the arm-ring back. When I am gone I pray thee put it on her arm—'tis hers; 'twill comfort me to know that she is wearing it. One other word, and then farewell. Go not with Ingebjorg to the sea-shore, lest after all I cannot tear myself away, and Angurvadel drink my life upon the sand; or lest, dying on the sea, my very bones drift back to whiten on your beach.'

He turned to go.

The king cried, 'Stay! It behoveth never a warrior to be bowed down like a woman. What is death for a king to fear, save only lest he meanly languish out his days and die on straw! To me, alas, it was never given to rise to Valhalla from the battle-plain. The unkind Valkyries chose me not. But Frithjof—I am old and thou art young. To me Death's message cometh, O my friend—to me!'

So saying, he thrust his sword into his breast, and whilst his life-blood spouted to the ground he signed to Frithjof to come near, and placed Ingebjorg's hand in his. Then lifted he the mead-horn high, and with a cheerful countenance cried, 'I drink to my land, to the old Northland. Hail ye gods! Hail warriors of Valhalla! I greet you; and I come!'

So died King Ring of the Northland. The people made his grave-mound, and the bards sang of his wisdom and his gentleness.

After this the folk gathered to the Thing-stone to choose a king; and with one voice the people said, 'Yarl Frithjof shall be our king, for Ring's boy is too young.' But Frithjof took the little gold-haired child and set him on his shield, and lifted him aloft in sight of all the multitude, saying, 'This is your king! Howbeit, until he be grown I will protect the land, and hold the throne for him. Here swear I never to seek my own, but his in all things; and if I am false may Baldur smite me with a yet more heavy punishment!'

The child sprang fearless from the shield to the ground and took Frithjof's hand; and the people shouted: 'The boy is king! Yarl Frithjof keeps the throne for him, and he shall wed with Ingebjorg.'

But Frithjof went away alone and said within himself—'How can I wed with one so sweet and fair, when I am yet accursed in the sight of the gods and before the people of my land?' Then he took his journey and came to his father's grave-mound by the

sea-beach. There he sat all one weary night praying Baldur to take the curse away. And Baldur showed him a sign in the darkness; for lo! he saw a temple in the air, which shone out from the gloom, rose up, and waned away. So Frithjof hasted back, and came to King Ring's palace; and he sent for artificers in wood and stone, and smiths that could work in gold and silver, and he began to build a temple to Baldur after the pattern which he had seen in the vision. All the while it was building he took no pleasure in hunt, or feast, or sound of harp. And when it was done, behold a grove of trees which no man planted sprang up round about, and shut it in on three sides; on the fourth the sea washed the rock whereon it stood, and pictured the temple on its shining face.

The temple was the wonder of the land. It had a gate of brass inwrought with curious work. Huge pillars upbore the roof—a mighty golden shield. The altar was one hewn stone of Northland marble, bright-polished, and carved with Runic words of power. Above it stood the image of Baldur wrought in pure, shining silver.

When all things were ready, Frithjof went up to the dedication of the temple to make atonement. As he came into the hall twelve youthful priestesses in white robes walked two and two about the altar, singing a sweet hymn to Baldur. Frithjof listened, leaning on his sword, and as they sang, his soul grew restful; his burden seemed to pass; and from above the altar the god shone mildly as the moon upon the peaceful night.

With stately tread came forth the grey high-priest, hoar in the service of the god; a man of lofty stature, whom age had not bent; noble his visage, stern of line, yet from his eyes was shed a kindly light.

Thus he spake:—'Son, welcome to the holy place. The strong man cometh tired home.

'Baldur has set a parable in the heart of man. To every child Hel gives back Baldur; but as the child grows, Hoder the blind god comes; then steals Loki into his heart, making Hoder's hand to swerve, and Baldur is slain, to dwell thereafter only as a shadow in his grown-up mind. A man must fight with Loki even as the gods must do. What careth Baldur that thou heap up stone on stone? Thrust Loki from thee, if peradventure the bright god may dimly shine within thy heart again as in thy childhood's days. He careth not for sacrifice, save only sacrifice of that which keepeth him from thee.

'Wherefore lay neither horse nor falcon on the altar, but lay thereon thy pride, thine anger, and thine hate of Belé's son

Why dost thou hate them? For their pride of birth? Thou art prouder of thy strength; yet it is not thine. The gods gave to thee thy strength, and to them their lineage. Have they wronged thee? Forgiveness is very sweet to Baldur. But thou hast been high-minded and high-handed with them. They have suffered; suffered wasting of their kingdom; their women mourn for warriors sleeping in the great war-mounds; their sister was carried away; Helgi died wretchedly——'

Frithjof stopped him. 'Helgi dead—nay, nay, kind priest! O say not he is dead, and I forgave him not!'

'Helgi is dead. Whilst yet this temple was a-building he warred with the Finns, and laid waste their land. On a cliff there stood an ancient temple to Yumala. No man had entered it for years, because of a saying among the people, "He that first goeth in shall meet the god upon the threshold." Helgi cared not. Rashly he sought to spoil the temple of them which he called heathen—men which worship God beneath another shape. The rusty key would not turn in the lock. He tore away the pillars, and shaking down the door, ran in. The heavy idol tumbled from its rotten seat, and fell on him, and crushed him in the temple's dust.

'Frithjof, forgive the dead. Lay by all bitterness and malice against the living. Make peace with Halfdan. Be at peace with all; so peace shall come into thy heart. Baldur hath spoken through me his priest.'

Then Frithjof beheld and saw Halfdan standing timidly upon the brazen threshold, fearing to come in. Quick loosed he the sword from his side; and he took the sword and his golden shield and laid them for an offering on Baldur's altar. And he ran to where Halfdan stood, and put his hand in his. The men spake not. Their cheeks reddened; and as they looked into each other's eyes, neither man saw, for that which gathered in his own.

So they were made friends; and the high-priest took off the curse from Frithjof.

Then was heard a sound of music, and from behind the altar, lo there came a band of maidens clad in bridal white, and foremost among them walked Ingebjorg in an ermine robe. She came to Halfdan, meekly to do his bidding in her father's place. He took her hand and said, 'My sister!' and he took Frithjof's hand and said, 'My brother!' then placed them hand in hand. The old priest lifted up his hands and blessed Frithjof and Ingebjorg in Baldur's name, and the temple was lightened all about with the shining of the god.

Grettir the Strong.

I. THE WINNING OF THE SHORT SWORD.

GREY old Asmund had his homestead and farm-land at Biarg in Iceland. His elder son Atli was good natured and well-spoken, so that most men liked him; but Grettir the younger son was a froward boy, chary of speech and mischievous in his play; his father cared little for him because of his unruliness, but his mother Asdis loved him well. Grettir was slow of growth; at ten years old he was stout-built but short of stature for his age; his hair was red: his face broad and much freckled. Many were the scurvy tricks that he served his father in his boyhood. Being set to tend the geese, he twisted all their necks. And one day being told to rub his father's back before the fire he caught up a spiked wool-comb from off a seat and harrowed it up and down old Asmund's shoulder blades. Asmund danced up on his feet, mad wroth, and cried, 'Thou good for nothing, foolhardy brat! What shall I do with thee?' 'Give me a man's task, not a milksop's,' answered Grettir. 'Well, then,' said his father, 'go out upon the mountains and tend the horses. Among them is Keingala, the weatherwise dun mare. Keep an eye on her; so shalt thou know when to turn the horses out and when to keep them under cover; for when Keingala will not stay out to graze a storm will surely follow.' 'That is manly work,' said Grettir, 'but I shall put little faith in the mare.'

So the boy went out upon the mountain-neck to watch the horses. But about Yule-tide, when the snow lay on the ground and the wind was stinging cold, Grettir's limbs grew numbed and bitten; for he was but ill-clad and little hardened to the frost. There was scarcely a bite of grass for the horses; yet Keingala would go out early every morning, no matter how rough the weather, and idle about in the windiest place she could find, grubbing the scanty herbage; and there was no getting her home before nightfall. Then Grettir thought that

he would cure her of this trick. So very early one morning he came to the stable and found Keingala champing away at her fodder just as though she was not always eating the whole day long. Grettir leapt on her back and set to work with a sharp knife to flay the mare. Keingala kicked and bounded about the stable; but Grettir mastered her, and though twice she flung him off he flayed her hide in a strip from wither to flank. Then he set open the stable doors and drave the horses out to pasture. Keingala browsed about, then bit at her back, then browsed again; but finding it perilous cold, trotted back to stable long before noon. Grettir drave all the other horses under cover, locked the stable doors, and came back to the house.

'What ails now?' said Asmund. 'Rough weather is coming, I trow,' said Grettir, 'for Keingala will not bide out to graze.' 'Aye,' answered his father, 'we shall have a storm to-day.' But never a storm came. The next day Grettir drave the mare out again, but not being able to endure the cold she soon came into the stable, and Grettir went home to sit by the fire. But the day went by and there was no storm. 'This is passing strange,' said Asmund; 'the mare never deceived me heretofore.' And next morning he went himself with Grettir to turn the horses out. But when he began to stroke the mare and the skin came off beneath his hand, he was the maddest man, and he called his son every ill name that came to his tongue. Grettir said naught, but stood and grinned.

When Asmund told Grettir's mother of these things she said, 'Poor lad. Whose fault is it? Thou seest how he turns out everything he does, and yet thou settest him to work. Who then is to blame?' So for all that, and many such like mischievous deeds, his mother Asdis contrived to keep the peace betwixt his father and him.

As Grettir grew up he waxed very strong and big of body; but he was always short for his age, though stout and well-knit together. For a while he had not skill to turn his great strength to account; but as he began to mix with older lads in wrestling games it was plainly seen that he had more might than most men.

Asmund had been wont to ride year by year to the Thing, with his friend Thorkel who ruled Waterdale; but one year when Thorkel came to fetch him Asmund pleaded that he was grown too old for wayfaring. Then said Thorkel, 'Let Atli go instead.' But Asmund answered, 'I cannot spare him from the farm-work, for he is of use to me; Grettir will do nothing for his victuals,

but he has some wit; maybe he can take my place in setting forth the laws. Let him go with thee.' So Grettir rode forth with Thorkel and his men.

On their way over the moors they laid them down to sleep one night, leaving their horses to graze about with saddles on. Next morning Grettir found that his horse had been rolling, for the saddle was slipped round under the horse's belly, and the meal-bag, which he had left strapped to the saddle, was gone. One of Thorkel's house-carles, by name Skeggi, also missed his meal-bag in like manner; and after they had both searched some while about the moor Skeggi picked up a bag which he said was his. However that might be, Grettir claimed it and would have it. So they fell to wrestling about the bag, and Skeggi getting the worst of it drew his axe and smote at Grettir; but Grettir caught the axe by the handle as it came down, wrested it away, and drave it into Skeggi's brain. Then he took up the meal-bag, and rode after his fellows. Skeggi was missed presently from the company; and when some asked Grettir what was become of him, he said that he had seen the man lying on the moor with an axe in his head, and he trowed some rock-troll had done it. Howbeit to Thorkel he told all about the fray. Thorkel said, 'This has fallen out badly, for Skeggi came of good kindred; nevertheless I will do all I may for thee. But consider now whether thou wilt still go to the Thing and take the chance of matters or turn back home.' Grettir said he would go to the Thing; and the end of it was that Skeggi's kindred made a lawsuit, and Grettir was doomed to three years' outlawry and a fine. Thorkel paid up the fines for him, but Grettir had to go abroad. Yet he took it lightly enough, and on his way home from the Thing, when he came to Sledgehill he caught up a great rock in his hands and flung it down upon the grass. There it lies to this day. Folk call it Grettir's Heave, and wonder how any man could have lifted it.

Asmund was vexed enough when Grettir came home and told what had befallen, and deeming his son good for nothing, he bade him go off with skipper Haflidi, who had a sailing-vessel lying up Whiteriver. He gave the lad neither victuals nor goods for the voyage, nor any weapon to take with him, but packed him off with just the clothes on his back. Grettir had few friends, because of his rough temper, and of those he had, when he wished them goodbye, not one bade him come back anymore. So he set out and trudged off towards Whiteriver; but he had not gone far along the road when his mother came running after

him and drew a sword from beneath her cloak, saying, 'I grieve to see thee so ill-provided, my son, but thou shalt not go quite empty-handed; here is the sword of Jokul my grandfather. Often it stood him in right good stead. Take it, and may it prove as trusty a friend to thee!' Grettir was very glad to get the sword, and now recked little of his lack of goods. So having taken leave of his mother, he came on to Haflidi and entered the ship; and soon afterwards the mariners hoisted sail and stood out to sea. But the skipper could get him to do nothing. Grettir would not labour about the ship, he would not haul a rope, nor help shift a sail to please anybody, neither would he buy himself off his work; he just went and made himself a comfortable corner in the bow, where he could be sheltered from the wind; there he lay down and would not budge. All day long he would lie there jeering at the shivering sailors, whose fingers were blue with cold from handling the frozen ropes. By and by there came a storm, and the crew had to bale night and day without ceasing; but Grettir only lay and mocked them. The men got so mad that they vowed they would pitch Grettir overboard; and in sooth they would have tried to do so, only Grettir turned his wit against Haflidi, and made sport of him as a 'shouting skipper,' which pleased the sailors greatly. But the storm getting worse, the ship laboured so much that it sprang a leak; and what with the sea coming in below and the waves dashing in above, the balers could not keep the water under. Then Grettir rose up lazily, and after he had stretched himself, came aft, and taking a cask began to bale. He filled the tubs and handed them up to another man to empty, but he filled them so full and so quickly that first two men, then four, and at last, as some say, eight men had to stand above to keep him going. So from that time the sailors held Grettir in high esteem. After the storm ceased there was much thick weather, and one dark night the ship ran on a rock off the island of Haramsey in Norway. Thorfinn was lord of that island, and at daybreak seeing their peril, he put off a boat and brought the skipper and his crew safe ashore, together with the most part of their goods; and in a little while the ship went to pieces. The mariners abode a week with Thorfinn, and then went away southward overland to their homes.

But Grettir remained at Haramsey. Thorfinn gave him food and lodging, but could make little of him, Grettir being so short of speech and caring neither for Thorfinn's fine table nor yet for his company. Grettir liked better to loiter about at his own

will than to follow Thorfinn. He made friends with Audun, a farmer who lived near, and would go and idle about his farm or sit in the homestead and chat with him from morning till night. Late one evening when Audun was walking home with him, Grettir saw a fire break forth from a mound, and he said, 'What place is that? In our land night-fires upon the ground betoken a hid treasure.' Audun answered, 'That is the barrow of Karr the Old. He was Thorfinn's father, and in his time held only a small farm; but since his death he has so haunted the place that he has driven out all the farmers from their lands, and now the whole island has come to belong to Thorfinn.'

Grettir said very little, but next morning he got some digging tools together and told Audun that he was going to Karr's mound. 'Let it alone,' said Audun; 'for Old Karr will surely do thee a mischief.' Grettir said he would take his chance of that, and seeing him determined to go, the farmer accompanied him to the mound. There Grettir set to work, and digged all day; and it was not until nightfall that he reached the rafters of the barrow and began to break them through. Then Audun earnestly besought him not to go into the barrow to provoke the hatred of the wicked dead; but Grettir heeding nothing, called for a rope, and letting himself down thereby, went in and began to grope about. The place was very dark and noisome; but as he stumbled hither and thither over horse-bones which strewed the floor, he ran against the arm of a chair. Old Karr sat in that chair; around him were heaped his treasures of gold and silver, and beneath his feet for a footstool was a chest of silver. Grettir recked nothing for the skeleton in the chair, but gathered up the treasures and took away the chest from under Old Karr's feet and brought them to the rope to make them fast. Suddenly he felt a mighty grip upon the shoulders that held him fixed. He knew that the barrow-dweller had wakened from his slumber, and he let go the treasure, and turned and wrestled with the hideous dead. Now up, now down, the two, close locked, reeled all about the floor, till the place echoed with their scuffle. Over the horse-bones, across the chair, each sought to trip the other up. In turn each fell upon his knee; but at last, with a great noise, Grettir flung Old Karr upon his back, then drew his sword, smote off the barrow-dweller's head, and laid it at his thigh that the dead might come to life again no more. Then went Grettir to the rope and having fastened the treasures thereto, called out for Audun. But the farmer had fled, hearing the noise of the wrestling, and deeming Grettir certainly doomed for death. So

Grettir climbed the rope by himself, and then hauled up the treasure. This he set upon his back, and hied off to Thorfinn's mead-hall, and there he spread out all the things upon the table —all save a short sword, a better weapon than he had ever seen. This he held still within his hand because he coveted it. When Thorfinn asked concerning the treasure Grettir answered, 'Many little matters happen late of an evening,' and told how he had broken open Karr's barrow and fought with him. Thorfinn answered, 'No man beforetime has had will or courage to break open the barrow, and I blame thee not; for wealth is wasted in the ground; but how came that sword within thy hand?' Grettir told him, and prayed that he might keep that sword for himself. But Thorfinn answered, 'It is an heirloom of the house. My father would never give it to me while he was alive, though many a time I besought him. Thou must first do some famous deed to win that sword.' So Thorfinn took all the treasure to himself, and the sword he hung over against the head of his bed.

Now at Yule-tide Thorfinn went off to the mainland, he and all his men, to hold Yule-feast on his farm Slys-firth, leaving no men folk save Grettir in his homestead. And it came to pass that twelve berserks which had been outlawed by Yarl Eric, ruler of Norway, for their misdeeds in ravishing men's houses of their goods and of their womankind, trowed this to be a good time to plunder in the island of Haramsey, and accordingly they came sailing thither on Yule-eve.

Grettir espied them come to land, and guessing pretty well what their errand was, went down on the beach to meet them. He said, 'Good sooth, but you are in luck's way, my masters, for Thorfinn is gone with all his folk to the mainland. There is only the goodman's wife and daughter at home, and there is plenty of ale to drink and of treasure to carry away. So come along with me to the homestead, and I promise you we will make good cheer.' The berserks being not a little pleased to find a man so ready to their mind, followed Grettir into Thorfinn's house. The goodwife stormed and raged at the men as they came swarming into her clean and new-decked hall; and she said to Grettir, 'Wretch! did not Thorfinn befriend thee in thy need, and save thee from shipwreck, and dost thou now requite his goodness by bringing robbers to the house?' Grettir sharply bade her hold her tongue, and bring the men dry clothes, and set out the tables for a feast, saying that they were all come to spend Yule there, and meant

to make merry. And Thorir, chief of the gang, spake, saying, 'It is no good squealing, mistress, nor making ado. I warrant that amongst us we shall find a better mate for thee than Thorfinn, and as to thy daughter and the house-women, we will spouse them all before we go. We have wives in every haven.'

'Spoken like a man,' cried Grettir, 'and of a truth they have small cause for bewailing.' The poor scared women ran weeping from the hall. But Grettir went down into the cellar and fetched up the strongest ale; with great draughts of it he plied the berserks till they made din enough in the hall. Far into the night they kept up the carouse. They could scarce make too much of Grettir, and would have him swear to join their fellowship; but he put off the oath till next day, saying, 'Ale is another man, my masters; but if ye be like-minded to me in the morning I shall freely join your company.' Now when the robbers were grown heavy with drink, Grettir said that he would lead them to Thorfinn's cloth bower, which was moreover the place where he kept his treasure. Well pleased at this they all followed him to a strong store-room, a little without the house. Grettir took in a light and showed them many rare and precious things; but the men were noisy in their cups, and fell to tumbling about and pushing one another as they looked at the treasures; and in the midst of the riot Grettir slipped out and made fast the door with lock and bar. They, thinking that the wind had blown the door to, paid no heed.

Away ran Grettir to the house and hammered at the goodwife's chamber-door. She, deeming it to be one of the berserks, screamed out in affright. But he said, 'Fear not, mistress, it is I. I have trapped them in the store-room, but there is no time now to talk. What weapons are there in the house?' 'Now God be thanked,' answered Thorfinn's wife, 'for old Karr's weapons are here; they will not fail if thine heart does not.' Therewith she brought out a big barbed spear, a helmet and a byrni, and the good short sword. Then Grettir armed himself, and came to the store-room just as the berserks were hewing down the door. He ran in amongst them, and slew two as they were coming down the steps. The others caught up logs which they found upon the green, and defended themselves as best they might; but they soon found with how strong a man they had to deal. There Grettir slew four of them, and when the rest took to flight he followed, and killed two which sought shelter in a barn, and two more that had hidden themselves in the boat-house on the beach. The other two got off in the darkness, but were found next day lying among the rocks, dead of their wounds.

When Thorfinn came home and learned how well his winter-guest had guarded his homestead, there was nothing wherewith he would not have rewarded him. Indeed by this exploit Grettir's name became renowned over Norway, for the berserks had been the terror of every homestead in the land. But Grettir would have only the short sword of Old Karr; and, much as Thorfinn treasured it, he gave it to him freely.

II. THE SLAYING OF BIORN.

Now as soon as the winter was past Grettir took leave of Thorfinn, who was very loth to part with him, and entered into a ship and came to Salft in Heligoland, where he abode with a man of high birth named Thorkel.

One of Thorkel's chief men was called Biorn, and being a blustering fellow of quick temper, who moreover thought no one so good as himself, he and Grettir were mostly at variance about some matter or other. Now it happened when winter drew on, that a very fierce bear took to roaming abroad at night on Thorkel's lands, and grew so savage that he spared neither man nor beast. Biorn, making great boast of his prowess, must needs go off to hunt this bear by himself. To that end he tracked the beast's lair, and went and lay down beside it, covered with his shield, to await the bear's return. The bear soon came up, roaring horribly, and clawed away his shield; whereat Biorn fell in such affright that he took to his heels, and ran home as hard as he could go, followed so perilous close by Bruin that he felt the hot breath of him all the way, and a close shave he had of it to get the house door to betwixt his heels and the bear's muzzle.

There were plenty to jeer at Biorn over this ending to his exploit, and Grettir in particular with his taunts stung him not a little; but Biorn seemed as though he heeded nothing, having already made up his mind to be repaid. And a few days after, when Thorkel and he and half-a-dozen more went to harry the bear, Biorn caught up Grettir's fur cloak and cast it into the bear's den. Grettir saw it lying there, and saw the bear sit growling over it, but he trowed after all it was no such great matter. He waited till evening came, and when the rest turned about to go home, Grettir went along with them for some way, but presently made excuse that the thong of his leggings had come undone, and he must stop and fasten it. So he lagged

behind till the others were out of sight, and then went off to have ado with the bear, not choosing to share the honour of the conflict with anyone.

When he got to the den's mouth, he slipped the loop of his short sword over his wrist and went straight in. Up rose the bear, and rushing to meet him, smote at Grettir with one of his paws; but Grettir hewed off that paw with his sword. Then the bear must needs lift up the other paw wherewith to strike, and in doing so down he dropped upon the stump, which, being shorter by a foot than he reckoned for, rolled him over into Grettir's arms. Howbeit the beast got upon his hind legs and wrestled with him as a man would do with another. Grettir caught him by the ears and held his head back so that he could not bite: the bear struggled hither and thither, and bent him to and fro, but none the more would Grettir leave go his hold on the bear's ears; till in the tussle they rolled together out of the lair, and, still griping one another, fell headlong over a ledge of rock on to a stone-heap below. The bear being heaviest fell undermost, and greatly bruised he was withal. Grettir soon ran his short sword into the heart of him, and then taking up his tattered fur cloak and the bear's paw came home to Thorkel who sat drinking with his men, and flung them down upon the table.

Then Thorkel began to fear for Biorn's life, and sought to make friends betwixt the two men, offering Grettir money to make the peace. But Biorn bade him put his money to better use, saying he was quite ready to deal with Grettir himself if need were, for that it behoved every block of wood to look after his own chips. Neither would Grettir take the money. Notwithstanding, at Thorkel's intreaty he agreed to do nothing against Biorn so long as they both remained with him.

But in the spring Grettir bade Thorkel farewell, to journey northward, and after wandering about all the summer, came to the island of Gartar, which lies in Drontheim firth. Biorn also went away as master of Thorkel's ship, and made a voyage to England; but on his return the vessel, being driven by stress of weather up Drontheim firth, came ashore upon the island where Grettir was. Grettir soon found Biorn and renewed the quarrel, saying, 'Now, thou braggart jester, save thou wilt fight I will rag thy coat for thee as thou didst mine, and dub thee coward beside.' And when Biorn found that he could not talk himself out of the mess, he went off with Grettir and fought, and in that fight got wounded so badly that he presently fell dead

Yarl Svein heard of Biorn's slaying from Hiarandi, brother of Biorn, who was in his service, and straightway summoned Grettir to come before him and answer for the man's life. But Grettir went and saw on his way his friend Thorfinn, who, being glad to have opportunity to repay Grettir's defence of his homestead, came with him to Yarl Svein, offering to pay the blood-money. When the matter came to be sifted, it was found that Biorn had provoked Grettir in many ways; and what with this, and Grettir's having rid the land of the berserks, whereof Thorfinn failed not to remind him, Yarl Svein put such a price upon the deed as he deemed befitting Biorn's kindred, and Thorfinn told out the money. But Hiarandi would not touch the gold: he said, 'Nay, I will either avenge my brother, or go after him the same road.' So there being nothing else to be done, the meeting broke up. But from that hour Thorfinn got his kinsman Arnbiorn to go about with Grettir, for fear Hiarandi might come upon him unawares. And a good thing it was; for one day as the two walked down a street, Hiarandi, who with five other fellows had hidden himself in a courtyard, rushed out with axe uplifted in both hands and drave it down at Grettir's head; Arnbiorn had just time to thrust Grettir a little on one side to avoid the blow, but as it was the axe came down on his shoulder and cut him a grievous wound cross-wise, against the arm-pit. Grettir drew his short sword, and in a moment hewed off Hiarandi's arm; and so smartly did he and Arnbiorn behave themselves, that Hiarandi and four of his men were quickly slain, and the other one ran off to tell the tidings to Yarl Svein.

The Yarl was very angry at this new slaughter, and summoned the Thing, and set forth the accusation against Grettir. Thorfinn came up again, bringing many of Grettir's friends; and these all pleaded that he might either be allowed to make atonement or to leave the land. Grettir also urged that he did not seek the fight, but that it was either his life or theirs. Then said the Yarl, 'Far better it had been thine, for thou wilt always be brawling, and if thou livest, many a man will get his bane of thee.' Howbeit, after much talk a respite was granted to Grettir till the spring, in order that they might hold a court to settle the matter at Tunsberg, where Gunnar, brother of Biorn and Hiarandi, dwelt.

Meanwhile Thorfinn interested himself mightily in his cause, and so did Bessi, son of Skald-Torfa; and when they were all come to Tunsberg in the spring, Grettir found his brother Thorstein Dromond, who was a court owner there, and he likewise promised to help him. But Yarl Svein somewhat delayed his

coming, and one day as Grettir sat drinking alone in an alehouse, the door was burst open and in ran Gunnar with three other armed men to take vengeance on him. Grettir caught up his weapons and set on fiercely. He struck down two of them with his short sword dead upon the floor, and then rushed furiously upon Gunnar to drive him to the threshold. Gunnar was driven back because he could not withstand Grettir's strength, but he backed fighting all the way, with his shield in front of him. But no sooner did he get to the door than Grettir slammed it on his hands, holding the door with his foot, so that Gunnar's shield and both hands remained within the room jammed fast in the doorway whilst his body was without. Then Grettir lopped off the hands at the wrist, so that Gunnar's shield fell within doors, and his body on the door-step, and straightway sallying out dealt Gunnar his death-blow. The fourth man fled away.

Now when Yarl Svein came to Tunsberg and heard of this he was madly wroth, insomuch that a man could scarce get speech of him. The Thing was thronged with men, and Thorfinn, and Bessi, and Thorstein Dromond said all they might, offering blood-money to boot, as much as the Yarl might doom. But Yarl Svein spake angrily saying, 'It is all too late to offer atonement or to seek respite for Grettir. Here has this man slain three brethren one after another, and it is idle to talk about breaking the laws by giving respite. It matters nothing how strong Grettir may be, or what friends he may have, or what he has done for the land. In this court all men are of equal esteem, and whatever it may cost we will have Grettir's life, and nothing short of it.' And the Yarl arose up and would listen to no more.

At that Thorfinn and Thorstein Dromond, and Bessi, and the rest of his friends took Grettir and went home to Thorstein's court, and began to barricade the place. And when Yarl Svein sent to them to give up Grettir they said plainly they would not, for that he was not so greatly to blame, and one fate should befall them all. Thereupon the Yarl gathered his men together, and there would straightway have been a fight, had not men of repute in the town come and prayed him not to carry the matter so far as to do battle with his own people and make a war which would stop no one could say where. So, by this his mind being somewhat changed, an agreement was made whereby heavy fines were to be taken for the slayings, and Grettir was to be banished from Norway, and go off to Iceland. Thorfinn cheerfully paid the money and parted from Grettir in great friendship, giving him gifts of raiment for himself and caparison for his horse, and bidding

him come and see him whenever he came to Norway again. After that Grettir took ship with some chapmen, and came to his father's house at Biarg in Iceland.

Old Asmund had prospered in all things whereto he set his hand, and was become one of the greatest farm-holders in Midfirth. Moreover Asdis had borne him another boy, whose name was Illugi. But Grettir cared not to abide in the homestead; he was always wandering about, getting into some brawl or other. He sought out his old companions who had been lads when he was a boy, and picked quarrels with them, from sheer desire to show his manhood; and when he found that of those who used to get the better of him in a wrestle by reason of their elder years, not one could stand against him now, he waxed so overbearing that there was no dealing with him. He deemed himself well matched to fight any three men either with hand or sword, neither would he flee from four; but against a greater number he would not fight of his own seeking.

III. THE CURSE OF GLAM.

AWAY up Waterdale was a homestead in a place called Shady vale. It belonged to farmer Thorhall, and the most part of it was grazing land, for there was no man about that part who bred so much live stock as he. But he never could get a shepherd to stop with him. It was not that Thorhall was not a liberal-handed master and a pleasant enough spoken man; but the place was haunted. One man after another took the job, but they all threw it up in turn, because of what they heard and saw upon the downs after nightfall. Nor did it rest with hearing and seeing, for many got badly hurt into the bargain. However, one day Skapti, the Law-man, met Thorhall at the Thing and said to him, 'I know of a shepherd who will stop with thee; a big, strong man, a Swede, named Glam; a terribly rough and surly fellow to have to do with; but if thou canst only put up with his ways, I'll answer for it he will keep thy sheep.' Thorhall said he recked nothing how uncouth the man might be either to look at or to talk to, so long as he could do this.

Not long after there came to Thorhall a great bluff man, with wolf-grey hair, and strange grey eyes with a queer glare in them. He said his name was Glam. Thorhall stared at him, and not

without reason, for he had never seen so frightful a boor. He said, 'Wilt thou keep my sheep?' 'Aye,' said Glam, 'if no one meddles with me; but I am apt to be rough of temper when anywise crossed.' Thorhall answered that he should be left to have his own way, but told him that the place was badly haunted. Glam said, 'Am I a man to be scared by bugbears?' Thorhall looked at him and said truly that he did not think he was. So they struck the bargain together.

All through summer Glam watched the sheep upon the hills: he had a great lusty voice, and they all came running together at his hallo. But no one about the farm could abide him, because of his gruffness and ill-temper; least of all could Thorhall's wife. Glam was a dreadfully ungodly wight, with some loathsome oath or other always in his mouth. There was a church on the farmstead, but he shunned it like pestilence. For all that he kept the sheep well, and up to Yule-tide not a head was lost or strayed.

Now though folk feast abundantly enough at Yule-tide, it is well known that all good Christians keep fast on Yule-eve. But Glam came blustering into the house as if it had been any other evening, and cursing all the home-folk for a pack of fools, called loudly for his meat. Thorhall's wife durst not disobey him for the life of her, and after trying to persuade him to fast like the rest, and enduring much of his ill language, she brought him out the food, saying moreover, 'Thou hast done a mightily evil thing; take heed nothing befall thee because of it.' Glam finished his meat and went out to fold the sheep upon the mountains, grumbling and swearing as he went.

The day had been greatly overcast and bitterly cold, and at twilight a great snowstorm swept over the place. Glam never came home that night. When it grew late and he did not come, the men about the house talked of going out to look for him; but it was pitch dark, and the snow-flakes fell so thick that a man could scarce see his hand before his face. Morning broke; still Glam did not come. Then they all made a party and fared abroad after him. They saw the sheep all scattered and strayed about the mountains; some dead, some huddled together against the rocks for shelter from the storm. But it was long before they found any trace of Glam. Late on in the day they came upon mighty foot-prints, big as cask-heads; these they tracked to a steep cliff side, whereabout the ground was all tramped down as though a great scuffle had gone on there. Rocks had been uprooted, earth and snow were churned to mud, which had frozen

and marked the stampings of the wrestlers. Glam lay there, dead and blue and swollen, his wide grey eyes glaring horribly. Putting this and that together, they deemed that the haunter of Shady-vale had fought with Glam and killed him, but did not get off without mortal wounds, whereof he doubtless must have died, for he haunted that place no more. Glam looked so evil in his death-sleep that the men were adread of him; nevertheless they went and fetched horses and harnessed them to his body to drag it to the church. But the horses could not stir it that way, for all the road lay downhill. Another time the men came bringing the priest with them; but that day, though they searched from morning till night about the place, they could not find Glam's body at all. The morning after, coming without the priest, they found the body, and the horses failing again to move it, the house-carls strove no more to bring it to the church, but made a cairn and buried it where it lay.

It was not long after Yule that the folk found that Glam did not rest quiet in his grave. He was seen of many about the farm in the dusk of evenings, and he took to riding the house-roofs at night fit to break them in. If a man had an errand after dark across Shady-vale, no matter how pressing, he would leave it till morning rather than venture in Glam's way. The hauntings lasted all the winter, but as summer drew on they ceased. Thorhall got a new shepherd that autumn from a distant part, a strong man called Thorgaut, who had the strength of two, but next Yule-day he was found lying against Glam's cairn with his neck broken; and the hauntings grew worse than ever. One morning when the housewife went to milk the cows in the byre she heard such terrible noises and cracklings hard by, that she ran back screaming for fear; and straightway the whole herd took fright and began goring one another. The neat-herd went out to them but never came back; and when they found him he was lying on his back in the cow-house, with his neck broken, and all the cows were dead. Day by day Glam killed cattle and sheep and horses. Things came to such a pass that at last Thorhall would abide no longer on the farm, but gathered together all he durst go after, and fled away to spend the winter with his friends. Whatsoever live thing he left, that Glam slew; and every horse and hound that crossed the place met the same fate.

Next spring, as soon as the sun got power, Glam lay in quiet, and Thorhall came back to his farm; but it was as much as he could do to get servants to abide with him; and towards winter the hauntings began again as bad as before. A girl on the farm

was set upon and killed; and what to do Thorhall could not tell.

Now Grettir heard by chance of these strange doings, and making up his mind to search the matter out, set off and rode to Thorhall-stead. Thorhall gave him a hearty welcome, but bade him look well to his horse if he treasured it, for that none could keep a horse many days upon his farm. However, Grettir said that horses were plenty enough, and he would risk that. So they locked up the horse in a strong stable and went to bed. But that night Glam did not ride the roofs nor break open the doors, and at daylight the horse was safe and sound. The next morning it was the same; and Grettir began to think the tale of the hauntings an idle one; but the day after, when they arose and went out they found the stable shattered, and the horse lying dead outside the door, with every bone in his body broken. Then said Grettir, 'It is not too much to ask, as the price of my horse, for a sight of the man who did this.' So when night came he took a rug with him, and came to the stable, and laid him down in his clothes upon a locker, wrapping him from head to foot in the rug, but leaving an opening for his eyes. There was one strong beam left at the end of the seat, and against this he set both feet. All the rest of the place was a wreck, and the splintered door was only held in its place by broken fastenings. There was a light burning, and Grettir lay awake, but for a long time heard nothing. A while after midnight there came a great noise, a sound as of some one riding the roof-tree and digging his heels against the rafters till they cracked again; and the thatch came tumbling down by armfuls. Presently Glam came down off the roof and thrust the door open. He was monstrous big, and thick-set withal. When he stretched himself up his head reached above the eaves. He stood there glaring about with his awful grey eyes; then he took the cross-beam of the house in his hands and shook it till the crazy, broken stable rocked. Grettir lay quite still. By and by, Glam, seeing a bundle lying on the seat, caught hold of the coverlid and pulled it. Grettir would not move, but set his feet faster against the beam and griped the rug in his hands. Harder pulled Glam, but the thing would not come away. Then he put both hands to it and dragged with all his might, and drew Grettir upright from off the seat. But Grettir held on to the rug till it rent asunder between them. While Glam wondered who it might be that could pull so hard against him, Grettir ran in beneath his hands, clutched him round the middle, and bent himself with all his strength to double him

backwards. But Glam was stronger than he knew of, and stood it like a tree. Back he bore Grettir to the seat, and thence from place to place, till every beam and panel of the house was broken with their struggling. Then Glam sought to drag him to the door and out into the open. Against this Grettir strove with all his might, well knowing that outside he had no chance. But in vain he knit himself back and bowed the thrall's great body towards him. He felt that he was going, and could not save himself; he gat no foothold, and was being dragged yard by yard towards the doorway. Nothing could save him. Then he thought that if he must go it should be with a rush; and, from pulling against Glam, he suddenly drave forward his hardest and hurled him reeling back the way he was going. Unprepared for this, Glam staggered backward with a run, his head smiting the lintel of the door, and breaking the roof away, but the door-sill tripped his heels, and down he fell upon his back without the house, Grettir atop of him.

Just then the moon sailed up from behind a black sheet of cloud, and shone upon Glam's eyes. Hideously they glared up at the moon, and Grettir was dismayed for the only time in all his life. He could not draw the short sword for the horrible staring of Glam's eyeballs.

Glam said, 'Little shall this encounter profit thee. For thy strength was not near come to the full, and would have increased twofold; but since thou hast met me it shall wax no greater. Moreover, ill luck shall cleave to thee in all things. Thou shalt become an outlaw, and a lonesome man; and in thy lonesomeness I lay this curse on thee—ever in the darkness to behold these eyes of mine. They shall follow thee whithersoever thou goest, and there shall be no hiding from them. That shall make it hard for thee to dwell alone. That shall lure thee to thy death.'

When he had thus spoken a cloud scudded past the moon and hid it; the spell that had lain on Grettir fell from off him; he drew forth the short sword and therewith hewed off Glam's head, and set it over against his thigh that thereafter the ghost might walk no more.

Then Thorhall, who had been watching afar off but durst not come nigh, came up and thanked God and Grettir heartily for this deliverance from the unclean spirit. And the two men took Glam's body and kindled a fire, and burned it to ashes, and they wrapped the ashes in the skin of a beast, and buried them in a place apart from the ways of men or cattle.

Soon after that Grettir took his departure, loaded with presents

which Thorhall gave him, and rode off to Biarg. There he passed the winter at his home. But since that affray he was grown restless and shorter of temper than heretofore. He feared to be in the dark, and durst not go forth alone at night because of Glam's eyes which fastened on him. And from that time it passed into a proverb concerning them which see strange and horrible things in the darkness, that Glam has looked upon them, or that they have Glam sight.

IV. GRETTIR'S ILL-LUCK.

THERE lived in Ramfirth an exceeding strong man, named Thorbiorn Oxmain. He had a kinsman and namesake, a sailor, called Thorbiorn the Tardy, who had a very ill-natured tongue which was always wagging. Grettir bore no good blood towards either of them; for some while before Thorbiorn Oxmain had come up with his men and parted him and Kormak in a fight of some half dozen a side on Ramfirth-neck; and ever since Thorbiorn the Tardy had jeered him behind his back for giving over after blood had been shed, the more so because one of the men that fell in the fray was his brother Atli's house-carle, and no vengeance was taken for him. But time went on, and Thorbiorn the Tardy still made his jibes. Grettir, though he heard of it, cared not to seek out a man whom all knew for a braggart; and living far apart they had not met.

Now in the spring Grettir made up his mind to go over to Norway; for tidings came how Yarl Svein had fled the country, and how Olaf the Saint, who ruled in his stead, gave right good welcome at his court to men of prowess; beside which there was some sort of kindred between them, for Grettir's great-grandfather, Onund Treefoot, and Olaf's great-grandmother, Gudbiorg, were brother and sister. Many other men were likewise going to see how things would fare with them at King Olaf's hands.

There had never been over much love at any time betwixt his father and himself; yet Grettir seemed very loth to leave him now, notwithstanding his mind was set on going. For old Asmund was grown decrepit and bed-ridden; he had given up tending the farm, and had committed that and all other matters about the homestead into the hands of his eldest son Atli. Wherefore it was with no light heart that Grettir took leave of the old man. But he bade farewell to his father and to Atli,

and his young brother Illugi, and made his way to Goose-ere in Eyjafirth, where, having taken a passage by the next ship, he tarried with other folk waiting for it to sail.

Now Thorbiorn the Tardy also had a mind to go to Norway, and though many sought to hinder him from going in the same vessel with Grettir he heeded nothing, but made ready at the last minute, and came down to Goose-ere just as the ship was ready for sea.

One and another gathered round him on the beach to ask for tidings; but Grettir kept himself apart. Thorbiorn eyed him and laughed, and said to them which stood about, 'Tidings? Good sooth, there is naught to tell of any account. Old Asmund down in Biarg is dead, and high time too. Old dotard! Would you ask of what? Good friends, the chamber smoked, and smothered him in bed. I pray you laugh. A champion dead of chamber smoke!'

Nevertheless none joined his merriment. They said, 'If Asmund of a truth be dead, a good and worthy man is dead But as for thee, see to it and beware lest Grettir hear thy words. Thorbiorn laughed them to scorn, saying, 'What reck I of Grettir? He must wield a sword more deftly than he did at Ramfirth-neck before I shape my words to please his mind.'

But Grettir had heard it all, and now walked up to him. He said, 'Thorbiorn, I will foretell thee a little thing. Thou wilt die neither of chamber smoke, nor yet of old age. But now for this time take back thy words, for I care not to have to do with him that mocketh at the helpless.' Then began Thorbiorn to brag aloud of his valour, daring Grettir, moreover, to fight, until, being taunted very sore, Grettir drew his sword and hewed at him. Only one blow he struck. Thorbiorn flung up his arm to guard it, but old Karr's blade flashed through his wrist and through his neck, and hand and head fell down upon the beach. None of the folk deemed other than that the quarrelsome wight had gotten his just reward.

Then they all went on shipboard and sailed across the sea to Hordaland which lies in the south of Norway. But when they were come ashore Grettir heard how King Olaf was gone up to Drontheim; so he took ship again in a trading vessel northward bound to go thither.

They had hard weather, and the snow froze and fell stinging cold upon them; and it was so when they were come off a haven against Stead, that they had not wherewithal to make a fire. Then they lay to, and being starved with cold, they watched

wistfully a homestead on the shore where a bright blaze flickered day and night. And at last Grettir's shipmates said to him, 'Thou art the strongest of us; wilt thou go ashore and bring fire aboard?' He answered, 'Aye, I will go; but see to it that ye all stand by me, whatever come of it.' And they said to him, 'Deem us not so shameful as not to uphold thee in aught thou doest for our sakes.'

Then Grettir threw off his clothes and slipped a rope about his middle, for those on shipboard to pay out, and taking with him a cask wherein to bring the fire, he leapt overboard and swam to shore.

The house they had seen was a house of refuge, built upon the strand for the shelter of mariners. The sons of Thorir of Garth, a man of great esteem in Iceland, had been driven into the haven by the stress of weather, and were carousing there with a dozen of their crew.

Grettir saw the house and ran in. There was a great fire burning in the midst, and all about was straw which had been housed there out of the snow. But Thorir's sons, seeing a great strong naked man, with icicles hanging from his hair and beard, trowed that he was a troll or some unearthly wight, and so set on and smote him with the first things which came to hand, which were the fire-brands from off the hearth.

Grettir recked nothing of their disturbance, nor would he fight with the men; he only wanted fire. He put the blows from off him as best he might, snatched a fire-brand from out one man's hand, and made his way back to the ship. When he got aboard he looked towards the shore and saw no house, but only a great pile of flame; the straw had kindled in the scuffle and burned the house, and Thorir's sons, and all the men that were therein. The mariners seeing this shunned Grettir for the rest of the voyage; and at every place whereat the vessel stopped they noised abroad how they were not guilty of the mishap, but that Grettir had done it; until at last they put in shore, drave him from their ship, and would have no more truck with him. They told the people that Grettir had burned Thorir's sons in the refuge-house, and straightway turned him adrift and sailed away. So the folk on shore looked on him askance and would have naught to do with him. Grettir, caring for no man, wandered on alone to Drontheim to meet the king.

As Olaf sat in the council on a certain day Grettir came, making obeisance before the king. Olaf knew him for a kinsman, and being well minded towards him said, 'Art thou Grettir

the Strong?' Grettir answered, 'So men have called me. But my strength availeth nothing to deliver me from an evil slander laid upon me, wherefrom I pray the king to give me quittance.' The king said, 'I have heard the tale told of thee; and I do not think that of thine own will thou didst burn these men. Neither do I see why thou shouldst not cast the slander from thee.' Then Grettir declaring himself ready to do whatsoever might hold good in law, the king appointed a day whereon he might clear himself by the ordeal of bearing hot iron.

Grettir, well pleased thereat, betook to fasting to prepare himself for the trial, and when the day was come the bishop and much people gathered to the church, and the iron was made hot for him to bear in his hand. Greatly marvelled the folk to see his muscle, and the cords upon his limbs. But as Grettir walked through the midst of the church, there started up from the church floor a boy of strange countenance, who pointed a finger at him and wagged his head, saying, 'Strange times these when every thief may free himself by calling for a trial! Are there ordeals, forsooth, for a man who burnt a half score guileless folk because they had fire and he had none?' Then Grettir could not withhold his anger, but clenched his fist and smote the boy behind the ear so that he fell upon the floor. But though they saw him fall, the folk which pressed forward could not find the boy's body; for it was an evil spirit raised up for Grettir's hurt. And there arose a great clamour in the church, insomuch that it was told the king, 'Grettir is smiting all about him.' And the king came forth and said, 'Grettir, strength like thine is given to few men, but of a truth thine ill-luck passeth all things. Blame thine own heedlessness that this trial is stayed. I do not condemn thee; maybe thou didst not burn these folk, but I cannot have to do with so unlucky a man. Go away home. I will not hinder thee from tarrying in Norway through the winter, but I will see thy face no more; and in the spring get thee back to Iceland, for after this I can have no more to do with thee. I am sorry; but there is no dealing with ill-luck.'

Grettir was very down-hearted thereat; but in nowise despairing, he determined to go and seek out his brother Thorstein Dromond. On his way he fell in with a rich bonder named Einar, who had a wife and a fair daughter called Gyrid; and Grettir abode at his house through Yule-tide. One day in Yule there came certain berserks to Einar, chief of them Snœkoll, a big strong man, who challenged him to fight for his women. Einar was old and past fighting, and Snœkoll stood before the

door railing at him, and threatening him with many foul words. Snœkoll set his shield on end upon the ground while he talked, resting his mouth upon the rim of it. Grettir heard him, and came forth; he lifted his foot, and catching the tail of the shield with his toe, kicked it so hard that the shield flew up and reft Snœkoll's jaw asunder and tare his throat open. Then he drew the short sword and smote off the berserk's head. Seeing this, the other berserks fled.

When Yule was over Grettir travelled east to Tunsberg, and dwelt awhile with his brother Thorstein Dromond, and much good-fellowship they held together. One morning as the two brethren lay in their beds, Thorstein awoke and saw Grettir's great sinewy arms lying outside the coverlid; and when Grettir waked he said, 'Brother, I deem it nowise strange that men cannot withstand thee, for never have I seen arms so huge as thine. Pity it is they were not more slender and more lucky withal.' Then Thorstein bared his arms and laid them alongside Grettir's. And seeing the gaunt thin arms of his brother, Grettir laughed loud and long. 'What arms! A pair of tongs! Sure, Thorstein, thou hast scarce a woman's strength.' Thorstein answered him, 'The day will come when thy great arms shall avail thee naught; but these lank arms of mine shall be strong enough to avenge thee.'

While Grettir tarried with Thorstein in Norway many ill things befell in Iceland. And first of all his father, the grey old Asmund, grew feebler every day, till, finding death draw nigh, he gathered his sons Atli and Illugi, and all the home-folk round his bedside. To Atli he gave his farm and all his goods, making him ruler of the household in his stead, charging the folk to obey him in all things. And he laid his hands on the head of Illugi his youngest-born and blessed him, saying that one day he should become a man of great prowess. Then he thought of Grettir, who was far away, and he said, 'His life will be restless as a rolling wheel. A mighty man is my son, yet will his might be of little service to his kindred, for he will scarce find it suffice to deliver him from his own troubles.' A little after that Asmund died, and was buried in a church which he had built on the homestead.

Now Thorbiorn Oxmain was mad wroth to hear how his kinsman Thorbiorn the Tardy had been slain by Grettir; and since Grettir was out of the way, he determined to be avenged upon his brother Atli. To that end he made a league with Gunnar and Thorgeir the sons of Thorir of the Pass, who were likewise

ill-friends with Atli; for they were in that fray on Ramfirth-neck, when Atli's house-carle was slain; and he prevailed upon them, together with six other men, to go and waylay Atli as he came home from a journey. Atli had but five folk with him, and when he espied Gunnar and his fellows, he would not take it that their errand was aught but peaceable, and so bespake them with the same gentleness which it was his wont to use to all men. When he had welcomed them all and asked their tidings, he turned to Gunnar, saying, 'There is that house-carle of mine which fell in the strife at Ramfirth-neck by thine hand. I have made no stir about it hitherto, well knowing that when I should next meet thee thou wouldst offer atonement. Is it not so?' Gunnar answered, 'It ill befits the men of Biarg to talk about atonement, with the blood of Thorbiorn on their hands. We are here to take our vengeance for that slaying, and we heed no other suit.' Atli said, 'Your pardon, but I am not the man to answer in that cause, neither art thou a suitor in it.' 'But I choose to take up the suit, and thou shalt answer for it,' said Gunnar; and therewith he cried on his men, saying, 'Lay on stoutly and fear nothing, for Grettir is not with them now.' Then, there being no help for it, Atli drew his sword, and though they were but six to eight, he and his folk defended themselves so well that they presently slew Gunnar and Thorgeir, and three of their fellows. They made peace with the other three and let them go.

When Thorbiorn Oxmain knew how the affray ended, he took up the suit for the slaying of the sons of Thorir of the Pass, and it was tried before two wise judges at the Thing. Atli had many friends, and was known to be a peace-loving man; it was shown moreover that he was attacked and fought only to defend himself. Wherefore he was adjudged only to pay half fines. So far as words went the peace was made, but the judgment rankled in Thorbiorn's mind.

Thorbiorn had a somewhat unruly house-carle named Ali, self-willed and sullen of temper; and Thorbiorn worried him greatly about his work, whereas the man would only work in his own way. When Thorbiorn found fault with him he got idle and would do nothing at all, till, being always at loggerheads, Thorbiorn one day beat him soundly, and sent him about his business. After that the man came over to Biarg and asked Atli for work. Atli said to him, 'Are you not one of Thorbiorn's men? Go back to him. I have plenty of workmen.' The carle told how Thorbiorn had turned him away and besought earnestly to be taken

on, for that he had no food and no friends, and knew not where to go. Pitying his strait, Atli gave him work, and the man was grateful; and getting only kind words from his new master, he worked so hard and so well that soon there was not a better labourer upon the farm. However, in the summer, Thorbiorn, hearing how well the man was going on, got fretful, and rode off to Atli at Biarg, saying, 'Atli, thou art always working some despite against me. Why hast thou harboured this man of mine? I meddle not with thy workmen; give him up to me.' Atli answered, 'I understood that thou hadst cast him out. But if he is thy man take him, I want him not.' Howbeit the house-carle would not go back with Thorbiorn, but ran into the house and hid himself, and prayed that he might not be given up. Thereupon Atli said, 'I will not hinder thee from taking him, but he shall go with thee of his own free will or not at all. I will not have him dragged from my house.' Then Thorbiorn said, 'Mark you well, that man is mine; and I forbid him to work here. Next time I come after him perchance it may be in no friendly way.' Atli made answer that threats would not frighten him—he was mostly to be found at home, and he had a welcome for a friend and a sword for a foe. With that Thorbiorn rode off. On a wet day at the beginning of hay-harvest, when all Atli's men were out mowing, Thorbiorn came riding up to the door with his harness on and a barbed spear in his hand. It was about noon-tide, and there were no folk in the house save Atli and his mother Asdis. Thorbiorn smote upon the door, and then stole on one side and hid himself. Atli heard the knock, and thinking that it must be one of the farm folk with an errand, came to the door and opened it, but seeing how the rain poured down he went not out, but stood with a hand on either door-post peering all about. He saw no man. Suddenly Thorbiorn rushed out with his spear in both hands and smote it through the midst of him. Atli gave a groan and fell forward. Dead he lay before his doorway, and the rain rained on him there. Folk mourned for Atli, for he was good and wise and gentle. There was no more mowing done that day. Ali the house-carle came and wept bitterly, reproaching himself for his master's death. Asdis the house-wife sobbed and moaned, tearless, as the aged do. They buried Atli in the church upon the homestead, beside his father. But no blood-money was taken for him, since it was for Grettir to take up the blood-suit if he listed.

But this was not all that happened while Grettir was away. Tidings came to Thorir of Garth how his sons had been burned

at Stead, and he straightway rode off to the Thing, seeking vengeance. He would take neither money nor blood for atonement, but claimed that Grettir should be made an outlaw throughout the land. There was none to speak for Grettir, neither any that knew the rights of this house-burning. Skapti the Lawman said it was not rightwise for any to put their hands to a judgment until Grettir's story had first been heard. But Thorir was a man of might, a friend of King Olaf; Bishop Sigurd had hallowed his ship; most men befriended him; all feared him. So it fell out that when he pushed matters to the hardest none dared gainsay him, and the end of it was that Grettir was made an outlaw, and a price set on his head, the same as was wont to be done with the worst of robbers and vagabonds.

Now at the end of the summer Grettir took leave of his brother Thorstein Dromond. In great friendship they parted, and they never met together more. So when Grettir landed in Iceland he learned these heavy tidings; first, that his father was dead; next, that his brother, the head of the household, was slain; and last, that he himself was outlawed, without a hearing, for a deed he had never done. Yet he took his troubles lightly enough. He said, 'These are heavy mishaps, but maybe there shall come a time when other folk shall find themselves more forlorn than I am this day.'

V. THE HUNTING OF THE OUTLAW.

SOMEWHILE Grettir abode in the ship, till he could get a horse to his mind. Presently he fell in with a merry fellow named Svein, who had a famous black mare very swift of foot, called Saddlefair. Grettir stole the mare one night from Svein's home-field and bridled her, threw a black cape over his clothes to disguise himself, and rode away. He never drew rein till he came to Grim Thorhallson's house. Grim was one of the six which fought with Atli against Gunnar and Thorgeir, and learning who it was, he welcomed Grettir freely enough, though in some fear of harbouring an outlaw. Svein missed his mare, and followed her from place to place till he tracked her to Grim's house. But Grettir told him a horse was not worth quarrelling about, and they had better be good friends; and the farmer, learning who it was that had taken her, made no more ado, but came in and stayed that night at Grim's; and a merry time he and Grettir

made of it together, parting next morning in the best of fellowship, and Grettir kept the mare.

Afterwards Grettir rode over to the old farm at Biarg, and for fear of being seen, came there at dead of night. All were asleep save his mother, who was a light sleeper, and lay long awake. She heard his footfall and went down and let him in. She told him all the trouble that had come upon their house. Grettir said that he knew it all full well, but bade her be of good cheer, for that he would either better or worsen things before long. For a while Grettir abode in the farmstead, none knowing of it save the folk about the house, and they kept their counsel.

Now it came to pass at the end of hay-harvest, when Thorbiorn Oxmain and his son Arnor were down in the home-field binding the hay, that they espied a man ride over the meadow bearing sword and spear. Thorbiorn said to his son, 'Of a truth that is Grettir, Asmund's son. Wherefore leave the sheaves and let us meet him stoutly.' Thorbiorn's shield and sword lay among the hay. The lad bore a hand-axe at his side. Thorbiorn took up his weapons, saying, 'I will meet Grettir in front; do thou go round and come behind him, and drive thine axe with both hands betwixt his shoulders.'

Grettir got off his horse, and taking his spear loosed the socket-nail which held the spear-head to the shaft, so that Thorbiorn should not cast the spear back again. Then he drew nigh and flung the spear; but the socket being looser than he knew of, the spear swerved in its flight, and the head fell down off the shaft upon the field. Thorbiorn ran upon Grettir and began to assail him furiously, that the lad might the better steal up behind his back. But Grettir chanced to turn his head, and seeing how things were, contrived to keep himself somewhat free to turn about, and when the lad was come within reach he swung the short sword round and drave it down into his skull. Then Thorbiorn smote at him, but Grettir put the blow aside with his shield, and lifting his hand clave Thorbiorn's shield in two, and the sword-point entered his brain; so Thorbiorn fell down dead.

Grettir sought all about the meadow for his spear-head, but could not find it; neither was it found till within the memory of old folk now living, by which token it is certainly known that Thorbiorn fell in that place, and not in Midfit, as some were wont to say. And for that cause the place is called Spear-mead to this day.

After this slaying Grettir went home to Biarg and told his mother how he had avenged Atli; but fearing to abide there

longer lest he should bring trouble on her, he fared abroad, and sought shelter with one and another as best he could.

Now Thorod Drapna-stump took up the blood-suit for Thorbiorn, and with a great company of Ramfirth men hunted Grettir hither and thither, so that he was hard put to it to find harbourage anywhere; and when any took him in for a night or two, they never left off praying him to begone. At last the Ramfirthers having hunted him as far as Samstead, heard that he was departed out of their borders, and gave over pursuit. Grettir came on to Reek-knolls, to the house of one named Thorgils, a bountiful man, who already sheltered two foster-brothers, Thorgeir and Thormod, rough men and fierce, who had been outlawed long ago for high-handed slayings. Thorgils bade Grettir welcome to food and lodging provided he could dwell with the foster-brothers without strife.

In Olaf's isles, some way out in the firth, was a great ox belonging to Thorgils, which he was fain to have home against Yule-time. Grettir went with the two brothers to fetch the ox. They sailed over in a very heavy ten-oared boat, but the wind being fair the weight of the craft mattered little as there was no rowing. When they were come to the isle, the two brothers asked Grettir which he would do, fetch the ox or mind the boat; and since he cared not whether of the twain he did, they left him with the boat, for the surf ran strong about the coast. Howbeit Grettir went into the water, and clipping the boat amidships with his hands held her fast; and though the waves broke over his shoulders and the boat tossed and beat madly about, Grettir would not let go his hold. Thorgeir and Thormod came dragging down the ox, and in a great sweat they were; but by dint of one taking the beast behind, and the other before, they heaved him into the boat. Grettir went aft, and left the brothers to row; but when they rounded Goat-rock there came such a squall that they could make no headway. Thorgeir moreover with the force of his pulling broke the thole-pins. Then he bade Grettir row while he mended them. Grettir took the oars and pulled till both snapped asunder. And while Thormod laughed, and Thorgeir whittled at new thole-pins, he caught up the mast and boom, and cutting notches in the gunwale to pull against, rowed so mightily that the ten-oared craft creaked and bowed beneath his strokes, and presently came to land. Then Grettir asked whether they would haul the boat ashore or take home the ox. But having had enough of the ox, which was strong and big and very unruly, they chose to see after the boat. That ox was the stubbornest brute;

he would go nowhither that a man wanted; and a weary dance he led Grettir. Thorgeir and Thormod stowed the boat and overtook him half way to the farmstead. Grettir was pulling with all his might, and the beast had set his fore-hoofs down in front of him and would not budge. However, the brothers said that they should not meddle with the job, and walked off home. Grettir was getting well-nigh tired, and finding that the brute would neither drag nor drive, he caught him by the hind legs and flung him across his back. Thorgils came out to look for him, and lo there was a man coming up the hill with an ox upon his shoulders! Much marvelled the folk at Grettir's strength.

But Thorgeir grew envious of him, and one day, going down upon the beach with his brother, they met Grettir coming up out of the sea from his bath. And Thorgeir said to him, 'Grettir, is it true that thou hast boasted thou wouldst never flee from before any one man?' He said, 'I have never seen the man from whom I would run. Mayhap there be such men, but thou art not one of them.' Thorgeir had an axe in his hand, and lifted it on high. Grettir had nothing in his hands, but he ran under Thorgeir's arms and flung him a great fall on the shingle. Then Thorgeir cried aloud to his brother for help; and Thormod came quickly and strove to pull Grettir from off him, but could not. A sword was by his side and he was going to draw it, but Thorgils came up and bade them cease brawling or they should no longer abide with him; so the men turned it to a game, and said they wrestled but in sport. And Thorgils had great praise from all folk, in that he could keep such reckless men from doing mischief either to one another or to their neighbours.

Now the time for the Thing being come, Thorod Drapna-stump brought on the suit for the slaying of Thorbiorn Oxmain. Atli's kinsmen made interest with Skapti the Lawman, and got him to defend Grettir. Skapti said he thought that he could make a good case, and one that should free him from his outlawry. When the judges had heard what was to be said on either side, they came to believe that, Atli and Thorbiorn having been bonders of equal worth, the two slayings should be taken to overset one another. Then said Skapti, 'Why so? Our side is not guilty of a slaying at all. The indictment against Grettir is clearly wrong unless you can show that he was outlawed since the slaying of Atli, because an outlawed man is wholly shut out from law whether for or against him.' Now when it came to be reckoned up it was found that Grettir's outlawry began a week before the death of Atli.

'Wherefore,' said Skapti, 'the suit is brought against a man who was at that time shut out by law from prosecuting the case, and for that cause the suit must fall through. Beside which it is still open for him who is nearest of kin to take up the blood-suit for Atli's slaying. For an outlawed man is as one dead, and can neither take it up nor avenge it.'

Then said Thorod Drapna-stump, 'This is all very well, but who is going to answer to me for the slaying of my brother Thorbiorn Oxmain?'

'That is your business,' said Skapti; 'see you to that.' Thereby the suit against Grettir failed.

Next, Skapti got the nearest of kin to Atli to set up a suit against Thorod Drapna-stump for Atli's slaying, and in the end Thorod was doomed to pay two hundred pieces of silver.' 'Now,' said Skapti, 'if you take the outlawry off Grettir we will give up the money-fine; and if you do not, you will find it an ill thing to keep such a man as he at enmity with all folk.' Thorod grumbled not a little at this, but for his part would have taken the offer. Howbeit, since Grettir had been outlawed at the suit of Thorir of Garth, they had first to learn what he had to say about setting him free.

Thorir, when he heard what was wanted, waxed exceeding wroth, and said, 'Never with my will shall he be freed, and I will put more money on his head than any man yet put upon an outlaw.' And with that he came to Thorod Drapna-stump, and prevailed on him to pay down the money for Atli's slaying, and make no bargain with Grettir. Thorod was loth enough, but he counted out the two hundred pieces of silver, and paid them over to Atli's kinsmen. Then, since he had lost his money for naught, and gotten no atonement for his brother, he joined with Thorir of Garth, and they each set a price of three marks of silver upon Grettir's head. Nevertheless, when the folk rode home from the Thing, they were nowise pleased to have Grettir still abiding in outlawry, for they knew full well that many a man would have to suffer for it.

After this Grettir fared away into the dales and preyed fearlessly upon the goods of all the petty bonders in Icefirth: he carried off their horses and cattle, their victuals and clothes and weapons; yet none durst withstand him by force. Howbeit the farmers took counsel together, and set on spies to watch for Grettir, and seek out where he hid himself at night. They found that he lurked in a wood on Waterfirth dale; and thither the farmers gathered together, thirty men in all, and came upon

Grettir as he lay asleep. Nevertheless they had great dread of him as he lay there, and considered for some time how they should take him. Then they settled that ten men should leap on him at once and hold him down whilst the others bound his legs. This they did, and cast themselves upon him altogether; but Grettir struggled mightily and gat upon his knees, and sent one stunned and sprawling here, and another there. But the men were so many that at last they had him down and set the bonds upon him. Then the farmers fell to talking what they should do with Grettir now they had got him, and each man was for wanting his neighbour to take Grettir home and keep him inward through the winter; but there was found none willing, for they said, 'Whosoever has him will have to stop farming, and set all his house-carles a watching him.' They thought, 'What are we to do with him? It is so long before the Thing is held.' At last, after they had turned the matter over, and saw that they durst neither keep him nor let him go, they determined to hang him; and with one accord they fell to work and got a rope over a trusty bough of a tree, and so made a gallows.

Now who should come riding by but goodwife Thorbiorg and her servants. She was wife to Vermund, the chief farmer about those parts. Vermund was away from home, and at such times the goodwife ruled the neighbourhood; for she was a wise woman and of sturdy will. Thorbiorg espying Grettir in bond said, 'Who is yon big-necked man, and wherefore have you bound him?' They told her, and she said, 'Great ill-luck it is for a man like that to be taken and bound by a pack of milksops such as ye. And what will ye do with him?' They answered, 'Hang him; for what else can we do?'

'In sooth you will not,' said the good dame; 'doubtless he is guilty enough, but he is a famous man and of good kindred, albeit his ill-luck is passing strange. Grettir, what wilt thou do for thy life if I give it thee? Wilt thou take oath to plunder no more in Icefirth, and to seek no revenge on them which bound thee?' He said that he would, and thereupon she made the Icefirthers cut the bonds. Moreover Thorbiorg bade Grettir ride away with her, and she gave him shelter in the farmstead till Vermund came home. Vermund was not well pleased with his wife for delivering Grettir from the Icefirth carles, and he asked wherefore she had done so. 'Goodman,' she said, 'the folk will deem thee a greater man than ever in that thou hadst a wife with mettle enough to do this thing.' Then Vermund spake to Grettir, saying, 'Thine is a troublesome life, and I have some pity for thee; yet I care

not to harbour thee longer, to get the ill-will of my neighbours. Wherefore, seek out thy kinsmen, if perchance they be minded to take thee in.'

Then Grettir journeyed away and sought lodging here and there; but one thing and another befell that scarce any would give him shelter; and he was forced to take goods and victuals from such men as he waylaid, in order to get food. And this he did for many winters. But he grew very tired of his lonely life, and by and by he sought out Skapti the Lawman, and prayed him to take him in. Skapti said, "Ill things are told of thee, Grettir. Folk say thou layest hands on other men's good; and it befitteth not a man of thy kin to rob and plunder like other wood-folk. I cannot harbour thee; for how shall a lawman break the laws by sheltering outlawed men? But take my counsel: give up pillaging, and seek out some place where thou mayest live by thy hands. But see thou dwell alone, and put no trust in any man, for there are few that would not betray thee for thy head-money.'

Grettir thanked him for this wholesome counsel, and soon after fared off to Ernewater heath among the mountains. There he made himself an earth-house over against Fishwater lake, and dwelt therein. He made also nets and a boat, and caught fish for his food, being fain to do anything rather than rob.

But the mountains were drear and lonely. He had none to speak to; there was no sound but the wind whistling through the heath and the waters lapping in the lake. Very terrible he found it to be alone; for in the dark Glam's eyes shone out and fastened on him, dreadful as he had seen them in the moonlight. So fearsome waxed Grettir that he could not bear his life; and he longed for company of his kind.

Now there was an outlaw, named Grim, a ruffianly fellow, with whom the Northlanders made a bargain that he should seek out Grettir and slay him, for which deed he should be rewarded both with freedom and a price in money. He came to Grettir in his earth-house, and sought for shelter.

Grettir was so glad to see a man again that he took him in and welcomed him right heartily. Grim dwelt there all the winter, and all that time he sought opportunity to fall on Grettir unawares; but Grettir always had his weapons by him night and day. One time Grim had been out all night fishing, and very early in the morning he came home and found Grettir lying in bed with the short sword over the bed's head. And that he might know for certain whether Grettir were asleep, Grim trampled

hither and thither about the floor, making a great noise with his feet; yet Grettir stirred not nor opened his eyes. Then Grim crept softly up to the head of the bed, and stealthily drew out the short sword from its sheath. He lifted it aloft, but in that moment Grettir sprang up and wrested it from out his fist, flung the man headlong on his back, and smote him to the heart.

After this, Thorir of Garth, yet burning for vengeance for his sons, set on another outlaw called Redbeard to go and slay Grettir. For that cause came Redbeard to Grettir's hut, saying, 'I pray thee give me harbourage through the winter. Thou art right enough to mistrust outlaws, and an ill name have I gotten for slayings and other misdeeds, but I am not the one to betray a friend.' Grettir misdoubted the man for all his fair words, but his loneliness was grown so irksome that he was fain to let him in. Nevertheless he held himself very warily towards Redbeard. So time sped on, and two winters slipped away, yet Redbeard never got a chance against his life. And Redbeard worked so hard, and was so handy about boatcraft and fishing, that Grettir took a liking to him. However, one night a great storm arose, and Redbeard got up in the middle of the night, saying that he would go and see after the boat. When he came down to the beach Redbeard took the nets and flung them into the water, and then stove in the boat; and having cast the pieces about the shore, came presently back to Grettir, shouting, 'The storm has broken the boat to pieces, and the nets are all afloat. Come down and let us see what is to be done.' Grettir rose up, and taking his short sword with him came down to the waterside. He saw the nets adrift, and bade Redbeard slip off his clothes and swim out to them. Redbeard said, 'I am not skilled in swimming, but all men say that thou art; wherefore do thou go after them.' Grettir said, 'So be it then. Only betray me not, for I trust in thee.' Redbeard answered, 'Deem not so ill of me. Lo these two years have we dwelt together, and by this time thou shouldst know I am well-minded toward thee.' Then Grettir stripped off his clothes and his weapons and laid them on the beach. He swam off to the nets, gathered them in his hands, and came in shore at a little jutting neck of land. But as he set foot upon the bank Redbeard ran upon him with the short sword and smote at him. Grettir fell backwards into the water and sank like a stone. Redbeard stood waiting in case he rose to smite him again, and keep him off from the shore. But Grettir dived and felt his way along the bank, under water, till he got round the other side of the neck of land. Then he rose

softly and came behind Redbeard, who was peering down into the water on the other bank. Grettir caught him suddenly by the middle and flung him backwards over his head. The short sword flew out of Redbeard's hand in the fall; Grettir took it up and smote the head from off his body.

From that time Grettir would take in no more outlaws to abide with him. Yet his loneliness oppressed him very sore.

Now Thorir of Garth heard of the slaying of Redbeard, and being determined to rid the land of Grettir, he gathered together in all about eighty men and went forth to hunt him down. But there came a message to Grettir from one of his kindred of what was brewing; so being ware of it, he went no more home to his hut but betook himself to the mountains, and lurked about a certain pass where a mighty rock had gaped open and made a narrow cleft, walled high on either hand. There Thorir and his folk found Grettir, and thinking that he had now caught the great outlaw in a trap, Thorir parted his men into two companies, whereof he set on one to enter the pass and fight Grettir face to face, while the other should go round the mountain and come in at the far end of the pass and take him in the rear. The pass was scarce wide enough for two men to walk abreast, and Grettir had little fear of holding it against them which came in front. Man after man that stood forth to meet him got his death-wound from the short sword. Grettir gave no ground and fought at his ease; for no matter how fiercely they assailed him they could only come on one, or at most two, at a time; and if they came two, they hustled one another and could make no weapon-play. But he knew that the rest were gone round to get in at the back of him, and continually looked about, thinking that when they came it would fare hardly with him. Yet they came not. And Grettir marvelled greatly. However, when many of the men which faced him had been slain, and many more wounded, Thorir saw that they could do nothing and so drew off his men. What troubled Thorir most was, that they which went in at the pass behind Grettir fared no better than they which assailed him in front. So from this deeming it useless to fight further with Grettir upon the mountains, he and his people rode off. They left eighteen dead men over that encounter and took away many that were sorely wounded. And when Thorir got home again he was greatly jeered at; for folk deemed it a shameful journey to leave Grettir whole and lose so many men.

After Thorir's folk were gone, Grettir, yet marvelling about the fight, walked down the pass, and there he saw a huge strong

man, sore wounded, leaning against the roadside. 'Who art thou?' he said. The big man answered, 'I am Hallmund. I dwell up here in a cave. I got an inkling of the fight, and had no mind to see a brave man slaughtered like a sheep. I kept the pass this end for thee, and thou canst count the dead.' Grettir did so and found Hallmund had slain twelve. Then said Grettir, 'Thou hast shown great manliness towards me; and so long as I live I will never forget it.' Hallmund answered, 'It is little enough to help a man in time of need. But come and abide with me, for it is lonely for thee in thy hut upon the heath.'

Glad words they were to Grettir. He went home with Hallmund, and they twain made friends together, and Hallmund's wife tended the wounds of both of them.

Now that Grettir had company he was greatly cheered in mind and temper. He abode with Hallmund through the summer and well-nigh forgat his fearsomeness of the dark. Then his old love of wandering came strong upon him, and he must needs fare away to the dwellings of men; moreover he longed to see his kindred again.

First he journeyed to Burgfirth, and thence to Broadfirth Dales, where he sought out a kinsman of his named Thorstein Kuggson, and asked of him in what part of the country he might with safety abide. Thorstein Kuggson said, 'Thine enemies are now grown so many that scarce any man may harbour thee. Thou art not safe here; but fare away south to the marshes; it is likely thou mayest find hiding there.'

So Grettir came south and dwelt in Fairwood-fell the winter through. Many lost goods at his hands, but could get no redress, for Grettir had housed himself in a strong place and was ever a good friend to those in need.

There was a seafaring man who came down to Whiteriver called Gisli; an arrant dandy, who prided himself beyond measure in his smart new clothes and polished weapons, and was withal somewhat given to boasting. He spake to the folk, saying, 'How cometh it to pass that you do not rid yourselves of an outlaw that doth so much mischief?' They said, 'Thou knowest little of the might that is in Grettir. Many have desired to win his head-money; for, beside the price put on him beforetime, Thorir of Garth last summer added another three marks of silver, making nine in all; nevertheless most men deem the money will have to be earned full dear.' Gisli answered, 'Like enough he may scare such folk as you; but I would have you to know that I have fought in battle along with the great King Cnut and am nc

common sort of a man. The people in that battle said they never saw the like of my fighting. They were wonderstruck. I do not brag, my friends; I only say what others say of me. But set your minds at rest. If this Grettir comes across my path I will terrify him.' He smoothed his beard, settled his fine clothes in order, and strode away.

Grettir was stopping with Biorn, the Hitdale champion, a bluff hardy fellow who would harbour outlaws in spite of any man. And Biorn said to him, 'Try and hap upon this fop. I would not slay him, but only have some sport with him.' Grettir laughed but answered nothing.

In the autumn Grettir made a sheep-fold for himself upon the mountains, wherein to drive the sheep he stole from the bonders. One day he had taken four wethers from a flock and was driving them up the hill-side, when six bonders beset him and sought to get their sheep away; but Grettir caught up two of the men and hurled them down the hill, whereon the rest held off a space; nevertheless when they called, the sheep were fain to follow them. And Grettir waxing very angry at the trouble the sheep gave him to drive, laid hold of them, locked them together by the horns, and flung them two by two over each shoulder. So he gat home with them to his lair.

Now the bonders having put Gisli in mind that near a year had passed and he had as yet done nothing against the outlaw, Gisli arrayed himself in the finest coloured clothes which he had and came riding with two of his shipmates to the hills where Grettir lurked. Grettir espied them riding, and coming down the hill-side he took hold of the bridle of Gisli's horse and laid hands upon the saddle-bag. Gisli said, 'Robber, knowest thou with whom thou hast to do?' 'Nay,' said Grettir, 'and I care very little, for never was I a respecter of persons; but I shall have this saddle-bag.' Then the three men leaped off their horses, and Gisli cried stoutly to his fellows, 'On to him, good comrades! Be not afraid of this uncouth boor, for I am with you!' Howbeit he sneaked behind their backs and feigned a little play with his dainty sword from time to time. As for Grettir, he mounted to a piece of rock, and swinging round the short sword, quickly laid Gisli's two companions dead; but Gisli never ventured within sweep of the blade. Then he leapt down to have ado with the dandy. But Gisli flung down his weapons and ran for very life; and as he ran he threw off his finery, garment after garment. Grettir followed, somewhat at his ease, meaning to give him time to put off his clothes. So Gisli ran and Grettir

after him, till they came to Haf-firth-river, and by that time Gisli had nothing on but his shirt and breech; and the river was bitter cold and full of ice-drift, and being swollen with winter rains was too deep to ford. Gisli was in a sweat for fear, and trembled from head to foot. Grettir caught him by the shoulders and flung him on the ground. 'Now,' said he, 'art thou that Gisli that was so fain to meet Grettir Asmundson?' He answered, 'In sooth I am, but now more fain would I be rid of him. Keep all thou hast and let me go.' Grettir said, 'Aye, aye; but first I must teach thee a lesson thou shalt not quickly forget.' Therewith he pulled off Gisli's shirt, and having uprooted a prickly bush which grew hard by, he laid it about the dandy's back and flogged him through and through, while Gisli cried and blubbered for mercy. As soon as Grettir let him go, he leapt headlong into the river and swam to the other bank, and so gat home. A whole week Gisli lay in bed with his body swollen, a fearful sight, and when he durst go out he told the folk that a fiend had met him on the mountain. Not a word he spake about Grettir. But people took note that from that time he did not swagger as was his former wont.

After Grettir had been two winters at Fairwood-fell, he went off to Hitriver and joined himself with two other men; and many sheep and beasts they stole. They three did a great fight there with twenty bonders which caught them driving away cattle. They got the cattle and slew eight bonders, but the affray was so noised abroad that Grettir came back to Fairwood, where he abode another winter. Then he went on to Hallmund and abode the next winter with him in his cave. But after Grettir journeyed away, Hallmund, who was ever good to wanderers, took in an outlaw named Grim who was a wondrous lucky fisherman. Hallmund misliked the luck of the man, and half in sport and half in spite would come at night and steal away the fish that hung before his door. Grim could not find who the thief was, so he sat up and watched one night in the dark; and when Hallmund came and had lifted the fish upon his back, Grim stole softly up to him and with both hands drave his axe down deep into Hallmund's shoulder and wounded him to death. Some say Grim knew not then that it was Hallmund; but however that might be, Grim had no after-sorrow for the deed, for he afterwards said, 'It served him right; what business had he to steal my fish?'

Now Thorir of Garth again took up the pursuit after Grettir, and hunted him over hill and dale with a greater company of

horsemen than before. So Grettir was forced to move from place to place and keep close hiding as best he might. There was another man with him, and one day on Reekheath, when, thinking themselves safe from any following, they rode more openly abroad, on a sudden Grettir spied Thorir and his troop close upon them. By goodhap there was a mountain dairy a little in from the wayside, and Grettir cried to his fellow, 'Quick, in with the horses;' and in they went and hid themselves there till the pursuers went past. Then Grettir bethought that he would send Thorir on a fool's chase. So he changed clothes with his fellow, and put on the garments all awry, and slouching his hat to look like a boor, came round by a short cut to the place where he should meet Thorir on the way. Thorir seeing a great lout of a carle by the wayside, said, 'Tell me, hast thou seen aught of a couple of horsemen riding over the heath?' And Grettir, disguising his voice, answered, 'Aye, good sir; but a little ago I mind seeing two villanous-looking rogues ride by; one of them a stout-built man. They branched off the track down there to the left, and I should deem they will not be above a mile away.' Thorir thanked the carle and rode off, he and his men, at full speed down the hill to the left. Grettir laughed and watched them; and presently the whole troop were floundering about in a bog, the horses up to their bellies in mire, and Thorir and his folk cursing the boor which had beguiled them. It took them all day to drag the horses out, and all night to clean themselves from the mire. But Grettir and his comrade sped away to Garth at their swiftest, and never drew rein till they reached Thorir's homestead. They went in and found Thorir's daughter, and Grettir said to her, 'My little gold-haired lass, when father gets out of the mire, wilt thou tell him that Grettir and his comrade have been to Garth to see him?' The little maid wondered what it meant, and they rode off. But Thorir was right mad when he came home: and no one could help laughing at the way the outlaw had befooled him.

But there were set so many spies upon Grettir that he deemed it best to part company with his fellow. So Grettir sent him away westward with the horses, and betaking himself to the mountains, wandered off northward in disguise.

Now Grettir learnt that there were strange doings in the house of one Stein, a priest who dwelt at Sand-heaps, over against Isledale-river. For two Yule-eves past, the house-carle that had been left at home to guard the house whilst the goodman and his wife went to church, was carried off and seen no more, but blood-

tracks were found on the door-lintel next morning. Wherefore Grettir came that Yule-eve to Stein's homestead seeking shelter. The goodman of the house was gone his way to church, and his wife Steinvor was arraying herself to follow after him, both she and her little daughter. Steinvor asked him his name; and Grettir, fearing to make himself known, said his name was Guest. 'Well, Guest,' she said, 'thou art welcome to guesting; but thou knowest doubtless the illhaps which befall in this house on Yule-eve; so take thy meat and drink, and tarry not.' Grettir thanked her but said, 'I am minded to abide here this night, and I will keep the house for thee.' She looked at him, and seeing him to be of great growth and well knit together about neck and shoulders, she said, 'Thou art a brave man;' and Steinvor tarried talking with him till the time drew on for church. Then Grettir accompanied the goodwife and her daughter down to the river which they had to cross. That morning the ice had been sound and good, but it had thawed fast, and now the river roared along, crashing the drift-ice as it went. Steinvor said, 'What shall we do, for there is no ford here, and there is no time to get round higher up, and neither man nor horse can cross this flood?'

Grettir said, 'Never fear but I shall carry thee over.'

'Nay,' she answered, 'but carry over the little maiden first, for she is the lightest.'

'I have no mind to make two journeys of it,' said Grettir; and with that caught up wife and daughter in his left arm, and waded into the river breast high. The stream ran very swiftly; the ice-floes in great packs came swirling down upon him, but he warded them off with his right hand, and came to the other bank. Then having set Steinvor and her child ashore, he came back to Sand-heaps about the time of twilight. And after he had eaten his meat he shut the homefolk in a chamber against the gable end of the hall, made a strong barrier of timber before the chamber-wall, and set a bench in front of it. Thereon he laid himself down in his clothes to guard the hall.

At midnight there was a great noise, and a mighty troll-wife brake in through the door. In one hand she bare an axe, and in the other a trough, and as soon as she espied Grettir she ran in and grappled him. They wrestled about the hall till everything therein was broken. The troll-wife was the stronger of the twain, and dragged Grettir out of the doorway. They brake the door-framings away with their shoulders as they burst through. All that night they struggled betwixt the doorway and the stream,

the troll-wife seeking to drag him to the river-bank, and cast him into the gulf, Grettir withstanding her with all his craft; but he had clutched the witch fast about the waist and durst not leave go. At last she got him to the bank; there Grettir gathered up his might and suddenly swung the witch-wife round. It was but for a moment, but he freed one hand, drew forth the short sword and smote off the arm which grappled him. The witch fell backwards into the stream and was swept away down into the force.

Grettir was waxed so stiff and swollen from the encounter that he scarce could crawl back to the homestead, and when he reached it he long lay sick and weary in bed. Stein the priest, and his wife Steinvor, tended him, and did so much for his welfare that Grettir revealed his name; and after that they harboured him none the less willingly, because of the deliverance which he had wrought.

As soon as he got his strength again, Grettir bade Stein come out with him and bring a rope, for that he was bent upon going down into the force whither the witch-wife was carried, neither would he suffer the priest to gainsay him. A cliff rose fifty fathoms sheer above the water in that place, and down below the whirlpool foamed and roared about the rocks. Grettir bound a great stone to one end of the rope and sank it in the water; the other end he made fast to a peg upon the cliff-top, and having made Stein promise to watch the rope, plunged off the cliff and dived into the force. He swam down through the water, and past it, till he came to some jutting rocks, whereabout the sand was dry, and the river rolled by overhead. A great cave was there, and within, by a blazing wood-fire, sat a huge and dreadful ogre. Seeing Grettir, the ogre caught up a glaive and smote at him. But the glaive had a wooden handle, and Grettir lopped it in twain with the short sword, and before the ogre could reach up for the sword which hung in the cave, that same short sword had hewed him well-nigh to pieces. The priest who watched above the force, seeing the foam stained with blood, and pieces of flesh tossing about in the water, deemed Grettir dead, and fared off home. But Grettir swam up through the force, and brought with him the bones of Stein's two house-carles which he found in the ogre's cave. Much marvelled the priest when he saw those bones, and he laid them in earth in the churchyard. And folk in that valley were never haunted more.

That winter Grettir found good hiding at Sandheaps, but certain rumours of these exploits being spread abroad, Thorir of Garth

was well assured that none but this mighty outlaw could have done such deeds, and so sent men there to take him. For that cause Grettir was minded to go to a little island in Skagafirth called Drangey, which was a good place for defence, inasmuch as it was so rocky that it must needs be scaled by ladders; but so fiercesome was he grown of the dark that not even for the saving of his life could he bear to be alone. So he hasted home to Biarg, and there abode for a few nights with his mother and his brother Illugi. There learning how Grim had slain his friend Hallmund, he went forth seeking him; but Grim had gone away two years and more. Thorstein Kuggson, his kinsman, had also fallen in fight, but neither could Grettir light upon his slayer. And while he yet wandered about the Dales seeking to avenge these two slayings, Grettir was met by Thorod the son of Snorri, a man of some prowess, who withstood him up in the fell. Thorod drew his sword and laid on madly. Grettir did but jest at him the while, nor did he draw the short sword, but only warded the blows off with his shield, till presently growing weary of the strife Grettir said, 'Leave this child's play, for thou canst do nought against me.' And when Thorod would not, but set on the more fiercely, Grettir laid by his shield, and taking him in his arms put him down upon the ground, saying, 'I can do with thee as I will; but thy father, the grey old Snorri, is a good and wise man, highly esteemed are his counsels, and I cannot bring sorrow to him by slaying thee. Wherefore arise and go thy way, and another time seek not an enterprise beyond thy strength.' So Thorod rose up, a little abashed, and parted good friends with Grettir. And when Thorod told his father how he had fared at Grettir's hands, Snorri said, 'Grettir has dealt gently by thee, and if my counsels may avail aught at the Thing to better his lot, I shall give them in his favour.' And ever thereafter the old man spake a good word for the outlaw.

Afterwards Grettir went again to Biarg and spake to his mother, saying, 'So lonely is my life and the darkness is so terrible, I pray thee let me take my brother Illugi for a companion. Then I can hie me off to Drangey and fear no man.' And his mother Asdis was very heavy at heart, and said, 'He is my youngest-born, the last of all my boys, and I had hoped to keep one of all my sons about me while I live.' But Illugi said, 'Mother, Grettir's lot is very hard. I trow not if he may find my help of great avail; but of this one thing he may be sure, I will never run from him while he is alive; and perchance he may find solace in my fellowship. Let me go, I pray thee.' Then

spake Grettir, 'Thou gladdenest my heart, dear brother; and if my mother will spare thee I am fain that thou shouldst go.'

Asdis wept and said, 'Take him, Grettir. Needs be thou shouldst have comfort of some in thy loneliness. But O my sons, I know that I shall never look upon your faces more.' 'Weep not, mother, even if so it be,' said Grettir, 'for whatever befall, folk shall say that thou hast borne braver children than any woman.' Then Asdis busied herself about their departure, and gathered together much of her goods and money, more than they could take, and furnished them for the journey. Grettir said, 'Farewell, mother; live on, hale and hearty,' and therewith they parted. Glad was Illugi at going with his brother. So they set out together, but all that autumn they tarried about the country-side and saw their kindred by stealth.

When winter was come they drew nigh Skagafirth; and there met them at Dinby a gaunt lazy fellow, who thrust himself into their company. He was a merry tom-fool whom men had nick-named Noise, big and idle and empty-headed, and Grettir had great sport with him; and because of the diversion which he made Grettir forbade him not to go with them. So they all came on to Reekstead, which is by the firth side; and Grettir prayed of the bonder there to put him across to the island. He would not at first, but when Grettir gave him the purse he had gotten from his mother, and the bonder had seen how full it was, he called out his house-carles and rowed them over the same night.

VI. THE LADDERS UPON DRANGEY.

Now Drangey Island lies somewhat within the firth mouth; and on the shore on either side, scarce a sea-mile away, were farm-steads owned by bonders of more or less account. All these bonders had shares in the island according to the bigness of their holdings on the mainland. Thorbiorn Angle and Hialti, the sons of Thord, owned the most of Drangey, because their farms were biggest, but nigh a score in all had some share therein. They kept rams and ewes there to fat for slaughter, because the herbage was good. The island all round about was cliff, which rose up sheer from out of the sea, so that none might come upon the pasture land atop save when the ladders were let down; and if

the topmost ladder were drawn up, no man could scale the rock side. In summer the cliffs are full of sea-fowl, and the winter Grettir came to Drangey there were eighty sheep upon the island. So Grettir drew up the ladders and set himself down in peace, for he had now both food and company, and was in a place whence none might oust him.

At midwinter the bonders rowed over to Drangey to fetch their fat sheep. Greatly they marvelled when they drew nigh at seeing men upon the island, and deeming them shipwrecked mariners they hailed Grettir, and called to him to let down the ladders. 'Nay,' shouted he, 'we have men enough upon the island; but if ye are bent on coming, come up as best ye may.' The bonders were greatly chopfallen at this, and besought him, saying, 'Only let us come up and fetch our sheep and thou shalt come ashore with us, and we will freely forgive thee for all thou hast slaughtered.' Grettir said, 'I deem it better that each should keep what he has got. That which I once lay hands on I seldom let go. So waste no more words.'

Fair speeches they made after that, and proffers of money, but Grettir only laughed at them and went his way. So the bonders turned their barge about and rowed back to land, and with woeful countenances came and told their neighbours what a wolf had got into their sheep-fold. They laid their heads together and talked the matter speech bare, but winter passed and they could not hit on any plan to get Grettir out of the island.

That spring much people flocked to the Thing which was held at Heron-ness; and it being no further from Drangey than up the fork of the firth, Grettir set his mind to go thither, for he always grew weary of abiding long in one place. So having charged Noise and Illugi to stay upon the island and see after the ladders, he swam off at night to the mainland. Disguised in a cloak and hood, Grettir came along byways, and reached Heron-ness. There he found a host of folk assembled from all the country-side, holding sports and merrymaking whilst the suits in the court went on. Booths were spread all about, and there was much wrestling-play. The two sons of Thord, Thorbiorn Angle and Hialti, were the strongest at that game; and these laid hold on whatsoever man they chose and dragged him willy nilly into the ring to fare at wrestling as he might.

Thorbiorn Angle, beholding a stout-built man sit upon a bench with a hood slouched over his face, went and laid hold of him and pulled his hardest. But the man sat still and budged never a whit. Thorbiorn said, 'Thou art the first man I have found

withstand me this day, and I reckon myself somewhat strong of hand. Who art thou?' The man said his name was Guest. 'And a welcome guest thou shalt be,' said Thorbiorn, 'if thou wilt but show us a little wrestling-play for our merriment, for methinks thou hast the knack.' Many more came up and likewise prayed him to wrestle with some one. 'Nay,' answered Guest, 'time was when it was a sport of mine, but I have left wrestling.' But when they prayed him yet more and more, Guest said, 'I am greatly loth to wrestle, being a stranger here; but if I must needs be dragged about for your pastime, you must do so much for me as to make a covenant to hold me scatheless until I come back to my home.' To this they were all right willing, and they gathered about whilst one proclaimed that peace should be established betwixt all standing there and the new comer called Guest; that he should be free to depart when the games were done, despite aught that might befall; and that they would hold him safe until he was come back to his homestead wheresoever that should be; so witness God and all good men; whereto they laid their hands together.

Then Guest stood up in the midst and flung off his cloak and hood and his outer garments, and lo, Grettir Asmundson stood before them! They gazed at him, and then at one another, and were exceeding vexed, as men which had befooled themselves. They began to break up in twos and threes and to upbraid one another. And Grettir said, 'Keep me not here unclad, but straightway determine whether or no ye will hold to the peace which ye have made; for I trow it is more to your profit than to mine.' Nevertheless they were long at debate about the matter; but at last Hialti spake up, saying, 'We have been beguiled; yet since we have plighted our word, we will hold to it, lest we be accounted shameful in men's eyes.' And thereto the folk became of one accord and thought his words brave and rightwise; but Thorbiorn Angle moved away and mumbled, but said naught.

Thereupon the men went to the playing-ground. Grettir stood up stiffly at one end, and first Hialti took a long run and drave forward with all his might to overthrow him; but Grettir abode the shock and moved no more than a wall. Grettir put forth one hand over Hialti's back, caught him by the breech and sent him whirling over his head. Then it was settled that both brothers should go against Grettir at once. And so they did. But though either of the Thords by himself had the strength of two strong men, the twain could not fling him. Grettir had always one of

the brothers down under him; and he wrestled with the pair till they gave in from weariness, and their bodies were black and blue with the gripe of his strong fingers. And men that saw, though they bare no goodwill towards the outlaw, could not help glorying in Grettir's exceeding manliness. So they let him depart, and Grettir held his way in peace and got safe back to Drangey.

But the poorer bonders fretted continually because they could not get over to the island, and one by one they came and offered to sell their shares to such as were better off. Hialti would not buy, but his brother Thorbiorn Angle dallied with them and made at one time as though he would buy, then said them nay, then put them off from month to month, and so at last bought their holdings for a mere trifle. And after that Thorbiorn drave a bargain with Hialti his brother and bought his share; so that by the summer he had gotten the greater part of the island at a very little price. And he was well minded to get possession thereof.

That same summer Thorbiorn Angle manned a barge and came over to Drangey, and having brought the boat to an anchorage, he talked with Grettir, who stood with his fellows high up on the cliff's edge, and sought to coax him to give up the island. And when Grettir did but mock at him, Thorbiorn spake, saying, 'Come now, Grettir; what wilt thou take in money-price to depart out of Drangey!' So Grettir said, 'Wherefore shouldst thou busy thyself so greatly about a matter which concerneth a score of other folk?' Thorbiorn answered, 'Sooth to say I have bought the shares of many of the bonders which had holdings herein, and the most part of it belongs to me.' 'Then spare thy pains,' said Grettir; 'for, if the holding of the island now lieth betwixt me and thee, we are not like to smother each other with our friendship. So go thy way.' 'Well,' said Thorbiorn, 'every dog has his day, and when thine is done it will be ill for thee.' 'That is my look-out,' said Grettir, 'and I will risk it.' So Thorbiorn went home.

By the time they had been two years on Drangey, Grettir and his comrades had killed all the sheep in the island save an old pied ram, which they called Specklesides. And he grew so tame that they had no heart to slay him. He was very big, and frolicsome withal; whithersoever they went he followed like a dog, and each night he would come and rub his great horns against the door of their hut before lying down to sleep. But they had no lack of food, because of the sea-fowl and their eggs. Howbeit firing was very scarce, and the two brothers set Noise to watch continually for drift-wood from the sea, and they likewise made

him tend the fire, charging him straitly to be thrifty of their stock of wood. But Noise was an idle fellow and loathed his work, and for that cause ofttimes got a shaking from Grettir or Illugi. He never got wood enough, and some days the fire was very low.

One night Noise let the fire out, and they were sore vexed, having no means of kindling it again. Grettir beat the thrall, and becalled him many ill-names. Then having stripped to his breeches, and bound his cloak into a bundle to take with him, Grettir leapt into the sea at eventide and swam off to the mainland to fetch fire. It was dark when he got ashore, and he went and entered into the homestead at Reeks where that bonder dwelt which at the first had taken him over to Drangey. All the folk were asleep; and he groped his way about till he came to an empty chamber where was a bed, and the embers of a fire glowed yet upon the hearth. So Grettir lay down upon the bed, and what with his weariness and the warmth of the chamber, he fell into a sound sleep; daylight came, and he still slept on.

In the morning the bonder's daughter and her handmaid rose up to do their house-work, and coming into the chamber they espied a man lying bare upon the bed, and the bed-clothes kicked off him on to the floor. They whispered together, and the handmaid said: 'As I may thrive, it is Grettir Asmundson! But who would have deemed a man so big about the neck and shoulders would be so small of growth below?' 'Hold thy prating tongue,' said the bonder's daughter, 'or he will wake.' But the handmaid answered, 'Good sister, I cannot help it. Only look! I never saw so strange a thing.' And with that she ran up on tip-toe to take a peep at Grettir. But as soon as she came nigh, Grettir, who only feigned to sleep, caught her up in his arms, and drew her to him; and she struggled with him and he with her; and the bonder's daughter ran out of the room and screamed; but none the more would Grettir let the handmaiden go till he had kissed her soundly. And at last she got away, laughing and blushing, but not so greatly ill-pleased.

Presently Grettir arose and went to the goodman of the house. And when the bonder knew of the strait he was in for fire, and how he had swum a sea-mile after it, he not only gave him fire, but got out a boat and put him ashore again upon the island.

That summer there came to Thorbiorn Angle a young man named Hæring, who was very agile of foot and a great climber; and Thorbiorn promised that it should prove greatly to his profit if he would scale the cliffs on Drangey. They laid their plan on

this wise; they were to row out to Drangey in a boat, and Thorbiorn was to land Hæring secretly on the rocks at one part of the island, and then go round to the side where the ladders were, and hold Grettir in speech whilst Hæring climbed the cliffs and came up at the back of the outlaw and smote him down. So they put off to the island, and Thorbiorn having landed Hæring before it was light, straightway set him a-climbing. Then Thorbiorn rowed round to the other side about daybreak, as though he were just come from the mainland, and he began to talk earnestly with Grettir and Illugi, making them large promises if they would only give up the island. But it so befell that as they talked, Illugi chancing to turn his head, beheld a man running towards them axe in hand. And he said to Grettir, 'There is some guile at work, for lo, a man runneth hither with his axe aloft.' 'Go thou and deal with him,' said Grettir; 'I will abide here and watch the ladders.' But Hæring, seeing they had knowledge of him, took to his heels and ran. Illugi sped away after him, and they raced across the island till Hæring came more suddenly than he reckoned upon the brink of the cliff, and not being able to stay himself, leapt down headlong, and was shattered to pieces upon the rocks below; and the place is called Hæring's Leap to this day. When Illugi came back, Grettir asked how it had fared with his enemy, and Illugi answered, 'He would not stop to let me ask how it had fared with him, but must needs go and break his neck over the cliff-side.' Thorbiorn Angle hearing that put off from the island, saying to his folk, 'Lo these two journeys which I have made to Drangey have come to naught, but the third time I go it shall not be in vain.'

Now in the nineteenth year of Grettir's outlawry died Skapti the Lawman: and that was exceedingly ill-timed for Grettir, inasmuch as Skapti had promised to bring about his acquittal so soon as the years of his banishment should be fulfilled. And the next spring died Snorri also, the man of all others who would have stood his friend. And when the summer came on, and the Thing was held, there was a talk about Grettir's outlawry, for his kindred came and urged that the time was come when he should be set free. But there were many which held blood-suits against Grettir, and these said that since he had done so many slayings whilst he was an outlaw, his time ought to be lengthened. Now Stein, the new Lawman in the room of Skapti, was a wise and just-dealing man; he gave forth the law that no man could be kept in outlawry more than twenty winters in all, no matter what ill-deeds he had done meanwhile. And the old records being

searched, it was found that this was indeed the twentieth summer since Grettir was outlawed, but that his time would not be fully accomplished in whole years until winter. Howbeit as the Things were held in summer, Grettir must needs serve either half a year more or less, inasmuch as it was needful to declare him free either at that Thing, when he would have fulfilled but nineteen years and a half, or at the one next year when he would have served twenty years and a half. But Thorir of Garth rose up and spake very fiercely against the outlaw. Thorir was grown old and grey; through Grettir's mishap he was a childless man; and all these years had failed to slake his thirst for vengeance. He demanded that Grettir should work out his punishment to the uttermost; and since the law said twenty winters, Stein the Lawman adjudged that Grettir's freedom should be delayed till next summer.

Now many folk were in great fear because the time drew nigh that Grettir should be free, and they stirred up Thorbiorn Angle to give himself to any manner of craft, so he might compass Grettir's destruction, rather than have him turned loose on them again. And at last Thorbiorn bethought him of his foster-mother, Thurid, who was very old and withered, and could scarce crawl about, but had much cunning in forbidden lore. And when he had told her his desire, the old witch said: 'I will help thee in the matter if thou wilt let me have my will herein; but seek not to know wherefore I do this or that.' This Thorbiorn promised her, and she said: 'Take me out with thee in a boat to Drangey, that I may look on Grettir and know where his luck will fail him.' So Thorbiorn made ready a ten-oared boat and came over to Drangey with the witch-wife lying in the stern, muffled up in wrappings. And Thorbiorn hailed Grettir, and began to talk to him as aforetime concerning giving up the island. He offered him much money, and also to hold him scatheless for all past deeds if he would go away. But Grettir said: 'Why wilt thou pester me these many times? Do as thou wilt, I shall abide here.' Thorbiorn answered, 'I might have known what an untoward thief I had to deal with, and spared my journey. But it will be a long day that brings me hither again.' 'I shall not pine for thy company,' said Grettir, 'nor yet if thou breakest thy neck like the last man that came here at thy bidding.'

Then the witch-wife moved in her wrappings and stood up, tottering and shaking. She looked upon Grettir and said: 'Many good things have been offered thee, and thou despisest them; behold now, evil things I cast upon thee. From this time

forth, good-heed, good-health, good-hap, shall fail thee.' And laying this weird on Grettir, she spread forth her trembling hands, and mumbled at him.

Grettir shuddered exceedingly when he heard her, and he said to Illugi, 'Curse this foul hag. She has set my blood a-cold. I fear me lest she work us evil by her cunning.' With that he caught up a great stone, and flung it wildly down into the boat: it smote the thigh of the witch and brake it. Thorbiorn's men bent to their oars and rowed away.

'I would thou hadst not done that,' said Illugi.

'So would I,' answered Grettir, 'but I fear her so. Would I had done more or less; and either killed her outright or never flung at all!'

Thorbiorn's foster-mother lay a month in bed till the thigh-bone was grown together again; and as soon as she could limp about, she came down to the sea-shore and looked here and there for something whereby to wreak her vengeance. A tree-trunk was lying on the beach, as big as a man might carry; and she went to it, and with her knife smoothed a flat space thereon, and cut runes on it. Then she went backwards and forwards about the tree, and cast spells over it. And having got men to thrust it into the water, she spake witch-words to the tree that it should drift out to Drangey.

Now as Grettir and Illugi walked about the island looking for firewood, they perceived a tree-trunk drifted ashore on the westward side; and Illugi said, 'Brother, here is firewood; let us take it home.' But Grettir regarded the log, and misliked it. He said: 'Nay, Illugi, we will not have this tree; it is an evil-looking tree, and there is ill-luck about it. See thou touch it not.' Grettir kicked it with his foot and thrust it back into the water.

Another day they went, and behold the log was drifted up again close to the ladders. This time Grettir drave it far out to sea, and charged Illugi by no means to take it for firewood if it should ever be borne back again.

It was the spring-time, and Grettir rejoiced more that year than any other to see the days lengthen, and the green spread over Drangey, and the flowers come; for he knew that the end of his outlawry drew nigh. One evening that spring the wind blew up into a gale and the rain poured down. Neither Grettir nor Illugi cared to go abroad; but the fire getting low they sent Noise out to seek for wood. Noise grumbled, saying that he always had to trudge about on hard jobs in ill weather, but he

went off to the beach, and the first thing he spied was the witch-wife's tree against the ladders. Not a little glad to have found a log so ready to his hand, he laid it across his shoulders, and bare it up the ladders, and bringing it to Grettir's hut, cast it down before the door. Grettir heard something cast down outside, and taking his axe went out in the twilight to find what it might be. He saw that Noise had brought a goodly tree, and bade him split it up. But Noise was sweating and sulky moreover, for his burden had not been light, and he said, 'Split it thyself, for I have done my part.' Then Grettir losing temper with the thrall, bade him get out of his way, and he took the axe in both hands, and not heeding what log it was, smote mightily into it. But the axe pitched flatwise on the tree-trunk, and glanced off into Grettir's thigh, and smote fast into the bone of it. Then Grettir knew the tree, and cursed it, and the witch-wife, and Noise. He staggered back into the hut, and there Illugi washed his wound and swathed it up.

The wound bled little, for all it was so great; it gave no pain; and for the first three days the edges of the flesh seemed like to grow together again. But on the third night Grettir tossed in his bed and could in nowise rest, and when Illugi had got a light and loosed the swathings, he saw that all the leg was blue and swollen, and the wound broken open anew and festering. Night after night Grettir lay and tossed and could not close his eyes for the sharpness of his pain; but none the less did his spirit bear up bravely, though sleep came not to assuage his torment. He sang of the mighty deeds which he had wrought through life; and Illugi would not leave his side, but sate by him night and day to comfort him.

But Grettir fretted much about the ladders as he lay. He had no mind to send Illugi from him, and so was fain to leave Noise to see after them. Always at night he would ask the thrall if he had drawn the ladders up; and oftentimes Noise would wax surly and say that with such gales blowing no boats would venture out in the firth, and that he deemed it folly to take such pains each day for naught. But Grettir never ceased warning him, saying that their lots were all cast in together, and ill hap for one would prove ill-hap for all. Howbeit Noise was wont to do much as he listed; for he was very wise in his own eyes, and wist not that any man could teach him aught. So a fortnight passed, and Grettir's wound swelled each day; the edges turned out and waxed so foul that he was like to die; and all that while the wind blew and the rain came down without ceasing.

VII. THE NOTCH IN THE SHORT SWORD.

As Thorbiorn Angle sate in his house there came limping in at the doorway his old foster-mother, who spake, saying, 'Arise quickly, get men together, and go over to Drangey, for I see that it shall now prosper with thee.' He answered, 'Nay, mother, no boat can put out with such a storm blowing; let us wait for fair weather.' 'Do as I bid thee,' said the witch.

So Thorbiorn went and gathered eighteen men, and for all the waves were raging so madly, he entered with them into a boat and put off to sea. The witch-wife stood upon the beach and mumbled, waving her hands as one that weaves in the air. And it was so that, in spite of all the storm, there was a space of blue-smooth water always before the boat; and by the time it grew dusk they reached Drangey. Thorbiorn looked up the cliff-side, and beheld the ladders were let down! Wondering greatly how this might be, he and his men mounted to the top and came upon the island. Noise was lying there fast asleep and snoring hard. Thorbiorn took him by the ear saying, 'Wake up, thou careless dog! Ill betide him that putteth his life in thy keeping.' Noise well nigh lost his wits when he saw eighteen men before him and knew what his folly had brought about. Straightway he began to bawl aloud if peradventure he might make Grettir hear; but Thorbiorn bade him hold his peace or they would kill him. Then was the thrall in great fear for his life, and being threatened of them all, he told of Grettir's hurt, and how he lay nigh death's door, with Illugi watching him. So they charged Noise to bring them to the hut, and he durst not say nay, but led them thither, crying bitterly as he went. But Thorbiorn despised him beyond measure and said, 'Thou art a cursed knave thus to betray thy master, although he is a man with no good in him,' and being come within sight of the hut, he took the thrall and kicked and cuffed him about till he fell down on the ground and lay there as dead.

Illugi was tending Grettir within the hut, when suddenly there came a mighty smiting at the door. Illugi deemed it was the ram, and said, 'Brother, Specksides is knocking at the door.' 'And wondrous hard,' said Grettir. As he spake the door burst open. Illugi caught up his weapons and sprang into the doorway. So well he guarded it that never a man could pass. They could do naught against him save with spears, and Illugi smote off every spear-head from its shaft. When the men found that there was

no getting in through the door, they mounted to the roof and began to tear away the thatch.

Now Grettir was so sick that he could not stand, and his leg was so greatly swollen that he might not lift it; but he kneeled up in bed upon the other knee, and reaching forth a spear, thrust it up betwixt the rafters, and thereby ran one man through and through. Then Thorbiorn Angle called to his men to leave the midst of the roof and come and strip away the thatch from the far end of the ridge-beam, where Grettir might not reach them, telling them they were safe from Illugi because he durst not leave the doorway. This they did, and presently came leaping down into the hut. The first man that sprang upon the bed Grettir cleft asunder in the midst with the short sword, insomuch that the one half of his body fell upon the floor, but the other half tumbled upon Grettir, and somewhat encumbered him. In that moment Thorbiorn Angle thrust him through, a great and grievous wound, betwixt the shoulder-blades. Grettir cried out to his brother, and Illugi came and flung his shield over him and guarded him full well. Long time they fought, and Illugi slew three of Thorbiorn's fellows, and gave the most part of them some wound or other; and all that while he never lifted his shield from warding Grettir. Nevertheless at the last, when they could come at him in no other manner, they bore Illugi down with beams and took and bound him fast. Then they went up to Grettir; but he was fallen forward upon his face and lay in a swoon; and his leg was a dreadful sight, for it was decayed right up into his body. And one and another went and hewed fiercely at him with their swords. But Grettir moved not, for he was long past speech, and the wounds they gave him scarce bled at all.

And when they all deemed him to be dead, Thorbiorn Angle laid hold on the short sword, but Grettir's fingers yet griped it so fast that he could in nowise wrest it away. Eight of them came, and pulled and twisted with all their might, but could not loose the sword from his holding. Thorbiorn called for a block of wood and laid Grettir's wrist thereon, and smote off the hand. Then only did the fingers loose themselves from the sword-handle. And after that Thorbiorn took the short sword and hacked not once nor twice with both hands at Grettir's neck before he could smite the head from off his shoulders. But the short sword might not abide that stroke, and a great notch was broken in the midst of the blade where it smote on Grettir's neck-bones.

So died Grettir, the most famous outlaw that ever lived in Iceland. He was but fourteen years of age when he slew Skeggi, and all things worked together for his glory till, being twenty years old, he met with Glam. He was twenty-five when he fell into outlawry, and he lacked but one winter of forty-five years old when he was slain. He abode longer in outlawry than any man; he was more mighty than all his fellows which have lived before or since; and none could overcome him while he was hale.

Then Thorbiorn Angle bethought what he should do with Illugi, and he spake to him, saying, 'I will give thee thy life if thou wilt pledge thyself to seek vengeance on none of us for this day's work.' Illugi said, 'I will not take so base an oath to save my life. Though I am bound both hand and foot, I tell thee, Angle, that if thou durst loose these cords, I will do what I may to avenge my brother upon thee.' Wherefore Thorbiorn went and took counsel with his fellows, and afterwards came back to Illugi, saying, 'Since thou art thus minded we have determined to slay thee.' Then said Illugi, 'Do thy worst; my heart is not afraid.' So they took Illugi, bound as he was, to the eastern side of the island, and there hewed him in pieces with their swords; but they could not kill his courage, for Illugi stood and laughed aloud whilst the sword-blades smote into his flesh.

Then Thorbiorn went home; and he took with him Grettir's head and laid it up in salt.

Now when the time of the Thing was come, there was a great gathering of folk; and Thorbiorn Angle came, and set down Grettir's head upon the table before them all, boasting of the great deed he had done, and claimed the head-money. But Thorir of Garth said, 'True it is that I, more than any other man, brought about Grettir's outlawry and set the price upon his head. But though I had better reason than other men to hate him, I count it shame to have taken his life through subtlety and witch-craft; and for that cause I will not pay the price.' Moreover there came many of Grettir's kin, who laid their suits against Thorbiorn Angle for the slaying of Grettir and Illugi, and for dealing in sorcery and forbidden lore, and again for bearing weapons against a sick and helpless man. And it was so, now that Grettir was dead and gone, that the hearts of most folk were turned towards him, and they deemed him to have suffered hardships through his life and to have been ill dealt with in his death. So it befell that very few were on Thorbiorn's side. And Stein the Lawman gave judgment on the suit, and said that the

head-money should not be paid for so shameful a deed. Moreover he adjudged that the slaying of Thorbiorn's fellows should be taken to quit for the slaying of Illugi and no more; but for the blood-suit for Grettir, Thorbiorn Angle should be banished out of Iceland, and never come back while any of Grettir's kindred lived.

Men went out to Drangey and brought away the bodies of Grettir and Illugi, and laid them in the churchyard at Reekstrand. But Grettir's head was taken to Biarg and given to his mother Asdis. She buried it in the church upon the homestead. Thereafter she spake but little; and she was too old to weep. She would sit in the old homestead crooning over the fire all the day. Her folk were very gentle to her, and let no care nor trouble vex her latter days.

But Thorbiorn Angle took ship and went to Norway. He wandered from town to town, and came at length to Tunsberg, where he abode a while, till hearing that Grettir's brother, Thorstein Dromond, dwelt there, he deemed his life scarce safe in that part, and so journeyed away to Micklegarth, and took war-pay from the Varangians. Now Thorstein Dromond knew not of Angle's being in Tunsberg till after he had gone away; but as soon as he was ware thereof, he called to mind the words he had spoken when Grettir made sport of his lean arms. Thorstein thereupon sent out spies to follow after Angle and send word whither he went. And when he had tidings that Angle was in Micklegarth, thither he journeyed after him. But there was much people in that place, making ready to go out to war, and Thorstein could learn nothing of the man he sought. They held a weapon-show, as was the custom before battle, and the Varangians thronged about it. Now Thorstein Dromond had never in his life set eyes on Thorbiorn Angle, neither could he tell by what token he should know him. But each day he went in and out among the crowd at the weapon-show, and watched the men which came to show their weapons.

One day there came a man who showed a short sword notched in the blade. Folk praised the weapon greatly, but said it was an ill-hap that so good a blade should have had a shard broken out from the midst. Then said the bearer of the short sword, 'With this blade I slew Grettir the Strong, the great Iceland champion, and so hard were his neck-bones that I notched the sword in smiting off his head.' And the people which stood there took the short sword in their hands and passed it about from one to another wondering at the tale. And Thorstein

Dromond also was fain to look upon the blade which had done so great a deed. They gave it to him. Straightway he clutched the short sword with both hands, uplifted it, and smote it into Angle's skull down to the jawbone. So Thorbiorn Angle got his bane from the sword of Grettir.

But the people laid hold on Thorstein and carried him away to the Chancellor of the town to answer for the slaying. Thorstein told what good cause he had against Angle, and how far he had travelled to avenge his brother's death; but the rulers of the city said that his tale might be true or not, he had no witnesses, and they had one law only for whosoever slew a man, and this was that he must die. So they thrust him into a dungeon to abide his doom.

VIII. THE HAPPY GOOD LUCK OF THORSTEIN.

THORSTEIN was a man of the greatest good luck in all things which he did. There was a wretched prisoner already in the dungeon, who, being cast for death did nothing but weep and bewail himself. 'Never lose heart, comrade,' said Thorstein, 'for if our days be few, the more need is there that we use up all our merriment before we die.' Therewith he began trolling out a merry ditty, and all that night made the dungeon walls ring with his cheerful songs. Moreover Thorstein had a goodly voice and was well skilled to use it.

And it fell out that a certain great lady of the land, called the Lady Spes, was passing by and heard him singing; and she thought within herself, 'Great pity it were that so merry a singer should die. And it is certain that he is a brave fellow to sing with death hanging over his head.' So she called to him down in the dungeon and said, 'Wilt thou take thy life from me if I can bring about thy ransom?' He answered, 'Nay, good mistress, I fret not over much about so poor a thing as life; but there is a wretched fellow down here who fears to die. Ransom him, and thou shalt do a kindly deed.' 'Nay,' said the lady, 'since thou art generous as well as brave and merry, I am more than ever determined to save thy life; but I deem thy comrade no great prize.' Thorstein answered, 'Fair lady, of this one thing I am determined; I will share my comrade's fate, whatever it be. Yet now I confess I should be sorry to die; for since my life has been esteemed of thee it is growing precious unto me.' And the

Lady Spes thought to herself, 'He is courteous, beside.' So she went straightway to the city rulers and offered a great ransom for the two men doomed to die. The Varangians needed money for their war; they haggled awhile about the price, but took the lady's gold and set the prisoners free.

Now the Lady Spes had wedded for wealth's sake a man far beneath her in kindred: a very rich man, old and covetous, whose name was Sigurd; and they had little fellowship. So as soon as Thorstein came out of gaol she brought him to her own house, and lodged him there unknown to her husband, for their hearts were turned to one another. She gave Thorstein money in abundance, and in sooth she herself began to spend it with a liberal hand. And Sigurd her husband came to her, saying, 'Strange ways are these. My money is being squandered at a wondrous rate; and as for thee, I scarcely see thy face at all. Strange ways!' he murmured, and shook his head. The Lady Spes tossed hers, and answered: 'If a man wed above him, he must look for things a little strange. My kindred told thee at the first that I should not spare thy goods. Neither have any been wont to say to me "So much and no more shalt thou bestow," nor shall I ever suffer them. Talk not then of thy dross; but if thou hast aught to lay to my shame, say on.' He answered, 'Nay, dear lady, I know not aught for certainty; but at times—I do misdoubt me—whether—lest—some other man—' 'How dare you slander my good name! What cause have you to think—' (she burst out weeping). 'This matter shall come before the law but I will be righted.' 'Nay,' said he, 'I only meant, but I may be wrong—' 'You meant,' she cried, 'to slander a true wife. This comes of wedding a man of low kin!' and flounced out of the room.

But Spes and Thorstein loved always together; and so many friends they made by squandering Sigurd's gold that none cared to say aught against them. And it fell upon a day when the pair were talking merrily together in a loft, that the lady bade Thorstein sing her a ditty. For she said, 'My goodman is sitting over his drink, and never comes this way.' With that she made fast the door and Thorstein began to sing. But he had scarce got through a stave when the husband at the head of all his servants came hammering without. In a moment the lady opened a chest wherein she kept her fairest raiment, locked Thorstein therein and sate upon it. 'Pray come in,' she cried: 'or stay, is the door fastened? I will undo it.' She shot the bolt, saying, 'Haste thee, husband; for surely thy foes are in

pursuit, that thou makest such an uproar.' 'Woman,' he said, 'I have found thee out; where is the man that was singing here but now?' She said, 'Thou art surely crazed. I see no man here. Thou art all too cunning. But a fool is wise if he will hold his tongue.' The old man searched about, but could find nothing. 'Why dost thou not take the man,' said the goodwife, 'if he be here?' Sigurd shook his head; and he said to his servants, 'Did ye not hear a man singing in this place awhile ago?' But his servants would have naught to say against their mistress, so they answered: 'Of a surety we thought we did, but it is plain we are mistaken. None can say certainly as to sound whence it comes. Sounds have strange ways.' So Sigurd gave it up; and after that his dame led him such a life that for a long time he durst not spy on her any more.

Another day it befell, when the Lady Spes was in the cloth-bower with Thorstein, that Sigurd came and rummaged all about, but could find no man; for the goodwife had hidden him underneath the pile of store-cloths; and the cloths were all smoothed out so trimly that none would have deemed them to have been disturbed.

The castle wherein the Lady Spes dwelt was built over the sea, the water flowing underneath it, and round the pillars; and she had a secret way made, with a little trapdoor leading from the floor of her chamber down to the sea, and fitted so cunningly that it seemed but the joints of the boarding. Now one time Sigurd told his wife that he must needs go away on a long journey; but instead of going, he hid himself about the place and watched. When they thought him gone, Thorstein and Spes made merry together and were seldom apart. One day Sigurd came out from his hiding, and after spying about awhile he saw the Lady Spes let a man in at the gateway of the castle. Then he heard the sound of singing in a chamber, and clambering up to the window, lo! he saw a man with her; and they were both laughing as merrily as might be. The goodman stole away softly, and went and called his neighbours, and gathered half the town together to come and see if what he told them was not true. But the Lady Spes heard the clamour of the crowd, and sent Thorstein down through the trapdoor into the sea, bidding him give her a token if he came safe to land. So when one part of the folk came and looked in at the window, there was naught to be seen save a lady sitting all alone, and toying with the rings upon her hands. And the other part of the folk, which went into the castle with Sigurd, found the chamber door ajar, but no

man therein. So all that Sigurd gat for his pains was the jeering of the crowd for bringing them on a fool's errand. 'Good people,' said he, 'I certainly beheld a man within this chamber.' The folk believed him not, but said, 'Overmuch wine will make a man see double; the double of a woman is a man, to make a pair; old eyes will have strange ways.' Then was the goodman very wroth, and said to his wife, 'Lo, these three times hast thou outwitted me; but since I am now befooled in sight of all the people, thou shalt go before the bishop, and purge thee by oath in this matter.' She answered, 'Thou hast done very foolishly; nevertheless for my own sake, and to free me from the slander, I deem it meet that I should go.'

When the folk were gone away, the lady watched all night, and toward morning saw a fire burning on the land. Then she knew that Thorstein was come safe to shore; for that was the sign they had agreed on. And while Sigurd was gone next day to lay the accusation against her before the bishop, Thorstein and she were together planning how she should be cleared.

Now the day being come when the Lady Spes should go to make her oath, she attired herself in the richest apparel that she had, and went forth with a great company of noble ladies to the church. The rain had fallen heavily for many days before, and over against the porch was a slough of mire which must needs be crossed to get to the church. A great multitude of folk was gathered together, and among them were many beggars asking alms of the passers-by. And a certain cripple, a hoary-bearded man, in tattered garments, who went on crutches, perceived how fairly Spes was arrayed, and came to her saying, 'Suffer me, I pray, to bear thee over the mire.' She answered: 'How shalt thou bear a burden that scarce canst bear thyself?' 'Nay, lady,' said he, 'but it may be that thou shalt fare none the worse for making thyself lowly toward the poor.' Then she suffered herself to be lifted on the churl's back, and he hobbled along with her into the slough. But when they were come into the midst of it, the beggar man seemed to get but poor hold for his crutches, for he began to stumble and to stagger from side to side. 'Gather up thy strength,' cried the lady, 'for if thou lettest me fall it shall go hard with thee.' The old man staggered wildly forward, and missing his crutch-hold, swooped off sideways, and scarce had cast the lady upon land, when he fell headlong in the mire. He floundered about and sought to catch the hem of her skirt to save himself. She, with a shudder for fear her sumptuous robe should be polluted, snatched it smartly from him, so his miry hand came

down on her bare knee. The Lady Spes sprang up and cursed the churl, and vowed that he should be beaten. He pleaded his great age and misery; and the people seeing how poor and wretched he looked, made intercession for him. So the goodwife took the purse from her side, shook the gold pieces into the beggar's lap, and blaming still his awkwardness, went straightway to the church.

Then when they were come before the bishop, the accusations against her were fully set forth. And the Lady Spes declared herself a good woman, and made oath saying, 'I swear that I am clean as concerning all other men beside my lord, save of that cripple who openly defiled me this day; and to none other have I given at any time of my husband's gold.' Now this being deemed a full oath, her kindred began to say that it was a shame for false charges thus to be brought against a lady of high estate. And so hard they pushed matters that they prevailed upon the bishop to make out a divorce betwixt her and Sigurd. And inasmuch as Sigurd was held to have forsworn himself and to have done very wickedly in bringing such lying slanders to her charge, he was driven out from the land, as a warning to other husbands who might else be minded to do the like; and all his possessions were adjudged to the Lady Spes to make amends for what she had suffered. All people pitied her and held her to have been greatly ill-used. But soon afterwards it began to be whispered that the cripple which had carried her over the slough was none other than Thorstein, and that some wise man had taught her how to swear an oath that sounded sooth the while it beguiled the bishop. However that may be, it came to pass that, not very long after Spes was divorced from her husband, and had taken to herself all his money, Thorstein came wooing her. And since her kinsmen left her free to do as she desired, Spes wedded with Thorstein and brought him all her riches. Thereafter they dwelt in the goodliest fellowship one with another. All things prospered whereto they set their hands, and their possessions increased continually, for all that they were the most bountiful in their dealings.

But after a time Thorstein being minded to go back to his home and kinsfolk, they sold their lands and their chattels and went away into Norway. There they dwelt many years together in great love and contentment, until old age crept upon them both.

And when Thorstein was threescore and seven years old, yet hale withal, he bethought him to go up to the court of King

Harald to do him service; but his wife besought him saying, 'Husband, there is somewhat I fain would speak, that has often been on my mind of late.' And he said 'Say on.' Then spake she, 'More meet it were to go to another King to whom we have more to pay. For lo, our youth is departed, and our days have been given overmuch to the pleasures of this world. Wherefore I will that we change our ways and seek after those things which shall make our everlasting welfare; to which end let us fare away to Rome-town and get our souls in health.' Thorstein answered, 'In all things I will as thou willest.'

Then Thorstein gathered all his kinsfolk together, and spake to them concerning the journey whereon he was bent. And he divided his goods before them, and gave one half to his kindred. And the portion that remained to him he divided again, and gave half of it for the founding of churches and chantries, and to distribute amongst the poor and needy. When he had so done he bade farewell to them all, and he and his wife fared away to Rome. There they made their shrift, and confessing by what subtile craft they had been joined in wedlock, gave themselves wholly to prayer and penance for the amending of their lives. Thenceforth they made a vow to dwell apart in chastity, to the end that they might more surely count on fellowship together above. So they told out money to build two stone cells; and when the cells were ready they prayed together, and parted at the doors. Thorstein entered into his cell; Spes into hers. The doors were shut; and neither looked upon the other's face again in this world.

Gunnlaug and the Fair Helga.

THORSTEIN EGILSON was chief among the Icelanders in Burgfirth, and kept house at Burg. Egil's kin have ever been renowned amongst the Marshmen; Thorstein was, moreover, a man of great estate; and his counsel was highly esteemed at the Thing, for he was well versed in law, wise-minded withal, and temperate of speech.

One summer Thorstein rode off to the coast, as his wont was, to buy wares out of the merchant ships that came from the mainland. He bought such goods as he stood in need of against the winter from the master of a Norse vessel, and getting friendly over their bargain, he and the skipper lodged together some days and went up to the Thing together.

And on a sunny afternoon Thorstein fell dozing in a booth and laboured heavily in his sleep. The skipper watching beside him marked how hard a time he had of it, but would in nowise disturb him till his sleep was out. And when Thorstein woke up wearied from his restless tossing, the skipper asked him, 'Hast thou dreamed aught?' 'I dreamed,' said Thorstein; 'but a dream is naught. I will tell it thee if thou wilt, to pass the time. Methought in my dream that I beheld the roof-ridge of my house at Burg, and a goodly white swan had lighted there. The swan seemed mine, and very fair and precious it was in my sight. Then came an eagle, black of eye, which swooped down from the mountains and nestling against the swan, cooed lovingly to her; and the swan seemed glad thereof. But presently another eagle came flying from southward and sought to woo the swan. The first eagle ruffled up his plumes and set on him: they fought fiercely together, beak and claw, till both being torn and covered with blood, the eagles fell dead together, and tumbled backwards, one on either side the roof-ridge. The swan sat lonely on the house-roof, drooping and very sad. An idle dream, my friend, betokening perchance that the wind will blow next winter from the quarters whence the eagles flew.'

But the skipper answered, 'Make not so light of dreams; and

as for this one which thou hast dreamed, I will foreshow thee what it signifieth. The fair white swan thou sawest on thy roof-ridge is a daughter which thy wife shall bear to thee. The eagles are two men of high kindred that shall love her overmuch, for which cause they will fight together and both lose their lives.'

'An ill dream-reader art thou,' said Thorstein, 'and I deem thou hast read mine in no friendly fashion.' The skipper's words misliked him; and he parted company with the man and came home to Burg.

Now as next summer drew on Thorstein was in some fear lest the skipper's words should be fulfilled. And before he rode off to the Thing he called Jofrid his wife and said to her, 'Now I charge thee straightly concerning thy child when it shall be born; if it be a woman-child thou shalt cast it forth, but if a man-child thou mayest nurture it.' Then Jofrid pleaded with him, saying, 'Surely a wicked thing it were for a man of thine estate to do a deed that is looked on with ill-favour even when wrought by poor folk who have many children and scarce bread enough to feed them.' But he answered, 'Thou knowest my mind; take heed and do as I have bidden thee;' and therewith rode off to the Thing.

Soon after he was gone Jofrid gave birth to a woman-child, fair as eyes ever looked upon, and being in fear of her lord, she sent privily for her shepherd and said, 'I cannot cast forth this little one. Wherefore take and saddle my horse and carry the babe westwards to Herdholt. My husband's sister Thorgerd dwells there. Pray her to nourish it for me for kindred's sake, and not to tell my lord. Here are three marks of silver for thee. Thorgerd will get thee away across the sea, where Thorstein shall never know.' The shepherd took the child and wrapped it warm and rode away with it to Thorgerd. She gave it to a woman on her homestead to nourish and bring up; moreover she gave the shepherd an outfit for sea-faring and got him out of the land.

When Thorstein came home Jofrid told him that the child had been cast forth as he had commanded, and also that their shepherd had fled and stolen her horse. Thorstein was well pleased, thinking that a horse more or less, or a runaway herdsman, was naught to make ado about. So for six years he wist not that the child was alive.

But as time went on it befell that Thorstein was bidden by his brother-in-law to a feast, and so came over to Herdholt. And one day after meat Thorgerd his sister brought in three little

maidens, and setting them on a bench over against Thorstein, asked what he thought of them. He answered, 'They are fair children, sister; but one is by far the fairest; and that one at more the look of us Mere-folk than of thy husband.' 'Aye,' she said, 'and so it may well happen, for that is not my husband's child.' 'How cometh that to pass,' said Thorstein, 'for surely she is thy daughter?' 'Nay,' said his sister, 'not mine, but thine,' and with that told him what had been done, and besought his forgiveness both for his wife and for herself. And behold as Thorstein looked upon the little maid there came into his heart a great love for the child, and he said to his sister, 'I blame neither of you, but am debtor to you both for thus hiding my folly. And now tell me how you have named her?' Thorgerd answered, 'Helga the Fair.' Thorstein took his little daughter in his arms and kissed her, saying, 'Rightly have you named her, for she is fairer than all others.' And he bade his sister make ready the child to go home with him; and he took her back to his wife Jofrid, and the little maid endeared herself to her father and mother and all her kindred by her winning ways.

Next after Thorstein, Illugi the Black was the man of most account in Burgfirth. He had many sons, but the goodliest was the youth Gunnlaug, who had dark eyes and waving red hair; he was thin in the flank, broad-chested and stately of growth; frank of speech and a good skald; and forasmuch as his words were apt to be stinging, men called him Gunnlaug of the Worm-tongue.

When he was fifteen years old his father sent him to Thorstein to learn law-craft, and he abode with Thorstein some seasons. Gunnlaug and Helga were then near of an age, and Gunnlaug liked far better to sit at chess-playing with Helga than to puzzle over law-craft with her father. They were always together, and a great love grew up between them, albeit for long none knew of it but they twain. Very fair was Helga; fairer than any maid in Iceland before or since. Her hair was like braids of gold, and so plentiful that it clothed her to her feet.

As Thorstein made merry one day in his hall with many other folk Gunnlaug came to him and said, 'Much of law thou hast showed me, but there is one other thing I fain would learn, and that is how to woo a wife.' So Thorstein told him how; but none the more content was Gunnlaug. He said, 'Nay, but I would that thou shouldest try if I understand it aright. Wherefore let me now make as though I were wooing thy daughter Helga.' Thorstein liked this little: howbeit to please the com

pany he consented, but said, 'Take notice, all folk present, that this wooing is but in sport, and whatsoever words are spoken shall go for naught, neither shall any pledge follow hereon.' Then Helga came forth, blushing like snow at sunrise. And Gunnlaug took the right hand of Thorstein her father, and wooed Helga of him, and named to himself witnesses from them which stood by. Then Gunnlaug asked Thorstein if wooing in that sort would stand good in law. 'Aye,' said he, 'methinks thou hast learned this lesson quicker than thy wont.' And the folk at Thorstein's table waxed merry at all this.

To the south of Burg, down in Mossfell, dwelt Onund, a man of very great riches, who had a bold strong son just come of age, called Rafn the Skald. And Onund gave his son money and a goodly outfit that he might fare away into other lands and see the manners of strange countries and make himself a name.

And after Gunnlaug had sojourned three winters with Thorstein, he also, being minded to fare abroad, came home to Illugi his father and asked for faring goods. So his father fitted him out and bought him a half share in a ship that was going to Norway. But while his partner was making the vessel ready for sea, Gunnlaug must needs go and loiter about at Thorstein's house, for he was fain to be where Helga was. And as the time drew on for the ship to sail he grew wonderly loth to go. Then Thorstein said he would give him a parting gift, and taking him away to the stables where he kept his stud-horses he chose out an unbroken chestnut, very spirited and well bred, and bade Gunnlaug keep it for his own. But Gunnlaug shook his head, saying he cared little about horses and would not have it. Thorstein had four powerful mares, and the best grey horse in Burgfirth; and he prayed Gunnlaug to take his choice amongst them all, for that he certainly should have a gift. Howbeit Gunnlaug would have naught to do with them. He said, 'If thou art truly minded to give me a gift, give me, I pray, the gift that I shall ask of thee.' 'And what is that?' said Thorstein. 'Helga the Fair,' he answered.

Then Thorstein frowned, and would not speak at all of that matter, but talked of other things till they got back to the house. But as soon as they were set down Gunnlaug said, 'Thou hast not answered me.' 'In sooth, no,' said Thorstein; 'I heed not vain talk.' 'I have spoken my whole mind,' said Gunnlaug, 'and mine are no vain words.' Thorstein answered, 'As yet thou knowest not thy mind. Thou art greatly unsettled, and bound to fare abroad. How then shouldest thou wive? Besides, I do not count thee to be her match. No, I will not hear of it.' Then

Gunnlaug fired up and said, 'Not her match! If the son of Illugi the Black be not a match for thy daughter, where wilt thou find in Burgfirth a man of better kin?' Then said Thorstein, 'Wert thou a staid and settled man like thy father, maybe I should not turn thee away. But there is many a man whom I esteem a better match for my daughter than thou. There is Rafn the Skald, there are Thorfinn's seven sons, all men of good estate.' 'And none of them of kin so good as mine,' said Gunnlaug; 'true, thou art of the race of Egil; but hast thou at any time done a deed such as my father when he fought with Thorgrim the Godi and his sons at Thornes Thing?' 'I care not to liken myself to other men,' said Thorstein, 'but this I know, I drave out Steinar, the son of Onund Sjoni, and folk reckoned that was somewhat of a deed.' 'Thou dravest him out forsooth,' said Gunnlaug, 'when thou hadst gotten Egil thy father to come and help thee. But our kin are more wont to trust to their own right hands than to their fathers' swords.' So Thorstein waxed angry and bade him carry his bragging up to the mountains, for that it would avail him little down there in the marshes.

Then came Gunnlaug home to his father and besought him to ride over to Thorstein with him to woo Helga. And Illugi said, 'My son, thy mind ought to be wholly set on ship matters and on thy faring abroad. Why busy thyself now about wife-wooing, the more so as it is not at all to Thorstein's mind?' But Gunnlaug intreated him, saying that he would go abroad just the same, but that he could not give his mind to aught else till this matter was settled. So Illugi rode over with Gunnlaug next day and greeted Thorstein and said, 'My son has had some talk with thee about wooing thy daughter Helga, and I cannot get him away till he knows what will come of it. We are neighbours and friends, long known to one another, and if for old friendship's sake thou canst say yes, I shall be well pleased, and will spare neither land nor gold when Gunnlaug weds.'

Thorstein said, 'I see naught against it, save that Gunnlaug is a roving man. Were he like thee I would not say thee nay.'

Illugi answered, 'Then will our friendship come to an end, for it is plain to me that thou deemest my son not good enough for thee.'

'Nay,' said Thorstein, 'it is not so. It is only because he is unsettled. But rather than lose thy friendship, this much will I do; Helga shall be the vowed maiden of Gunnlaug, and tarry three winters for him, but I will not betroth her to him. In that time let him rove and shape his ways. If in three years he come

not back, or coming, if his ways mislike me, I shall be free to wed Helga to whom I will.'

So with that bond the two friends went their way. Gunnlaug and Helga kissed and parted; he with a light heart hied off to his ship and sailed for Norway, and left her radiant with a joy that shone out through her parting tears.

Yarl Eric and his brother Svein ruled Norway then, and being come to land, Gunnlaug took six of his ship-fellows with him, and leaving the rest to unload the merchandise, came up to Hladir, at Drontheim, where the Yarl kept court. The Yarl saw as they came into the hall that Gunnlaug had a great and very painful boil upon his instep, wherefrom came blood and matter as he walked; yet Gunnlaug flinched nothing, but strode along the firmest of them all. And Yarl Eric said, 'Icelander, what ails thy foot?' 'A boil,' said he. 'Why then dost thou not walk lame?' asked the Yarl. Gunnlaug answered, scornful of the pain, 'Why should a man walk lame while both legs are of one length?' The Yarl said, 'How old art thou?' 'Eighteen winters,' answered Gunnlaug. Then said Yarl Eric, 'A man of so sharp a tongue will not live eighteen winters more without good prayers for him.' Gunnlaug muttered something. 'What saidst thou, Icelander?' asked the Yarl. 'Pray rather for thyself than me,' said Gunnlaug. 'What have I to pray for?' said Eric. 'Pray,' answered the Icelander, 'that thou be not slain by a thrall in the first hiding-place whereinto thou sneakest, even as Hakon thy father was.' The Yarl flushed up blood-red, and called to his men to seize the Icelander; but he thought better of it, and bade them instead to tell Gunnlaug, if he held his life of any account, to begone at once and never more set foot within the realm.

So Gunnlaug went down to the shore, and finding a ship bound for England took a passage therein, and after a fair voyage, came sailing up Thames river to London Bridge about the time of autumn.

In those days Æthelred was King of England and kept court in London; and they spake the Norse tongue throughout the land, which indeed prevailed until William the Bastard won England and changed the tongue to French. And Gunnlaug came to King Æthelred saying, 'I have made a royal song in thine honour which I fain would sing.' Then the King commanded to keep silence whilst the song was sung; and straightway Gunnlaug gave forth a right worthy song, the burden whereof was the might and majesty of the King of England. Well pleased was Æthelred with the skald, and for a song-gift he gave Gunnlaug a

scarlet cloak glittering to the hem with gold embroidery, and lined with precious furs. Moreover he made Gunnlaug his man, and took an oath of service from him.

One morning early, when London streets were lonesome, three men met Gunnlaug, and their leader, a burly man of evil eye, named Thororm, stopped him saying, 'Northman, lend me some money, and on such and such a day I will repay thee.' Then said Gunnlaug, 'Thou art unknown to me; nevertheless take the money and see thou keep thy word.' A while after, this coming to the King's ears, Æthelred spake to Gunnlaug, saying, 'Thou hast done foolishly, for the man Thororm is the greatest robber and the strongest viking in the land. Howbeit, take no thought for thy money; I will repay thee; but have no more dealings with this man.' But Gunnlaug said, 'Nay, I have no mind to gather my debts save from my debtors; and a shame it were for us, the King's men, to be put in fear of any.' Therewith Gunnlaug went and sought out the viking and said to him, 'Pay me that thou owest within three days, or else I will come and take it from thee.' Thororm laughed and said that when folk asked him for lendings of gold he was ready to pay them back with steel. So Gunnlaug came again to the King and told how he was going to fight the viking within three days. And the King said, 'It has ill befallen; for this man's eyes can dull the edge of any blade. Nevertheless I have a sword that is proof against evil craft; that shalt thou take.' And it was so that when Gunnlaug went out to do battle with Thororm, the viking said, 'Let me look upon thy sword, Northman.' And Gunnlaug drew forth his own blade from its sheath and showed him, but the King's sword he kept slung on his left wrist by a loop and hidden behind his shield. The viking said, 'I fear not that sword,' and thereupon set on Gunnlaug and cut his shield atwain. Gunnlaug drew the King's gift, and the viking, weening it had been the sword he had looked upon, recked not so much as to ward off the blow; so the sword smote him and slew him.

Gunnlaug got great renown for this deed all over England; but when spring was come he told the King that he must fare away to other lands. So King Æthelred gave him a gold ring that weighed six ounces, and let him depart, but charged him by his fealty to come back in autumn-tide next year. Then Gunnlaug sailed for Ireland, and came and sang at the court of King Sigtrygg at Dublin. From him he received rich gifts of scarlet raiment, a tunic gold-broidered, and a gold ring worth a mark. Thence he went north to the Orkneys and abode the winter with

Yarl Sigurd, and afterwards took ship again and came to Upsala in Sweden, where King Olaf had set up his throne, and all his noblest counsellors and warriors were gathered about him.

And when King Olaf knew Gunnlaug for an Icelandman, he greeted him well and said, 'We have here already a man of some note from thy country. Go thou and sit beside him.' Then Gunnlaug said, 'What is his name, lord, that I may know him?' The King answered, 'Rafn the Skald.'

Gunnlaug had heard the folk at Burgfirth talk of Rafn the Skald who dwelt down south in Mossfell, but had never yet set eyes on him; and when he now beheld Rafn an ill boding seemed to come into his mind. But the two men sate together and made friends and spake one to another of their travels; and the foreboding passed.

Now on a day when they were both before the King Gunnlaug spake to King Olaf, saying, 'Lord, I pray thee hearken to a song which I have brought thee.' Rafn spake also, saying, 'O King, I have likewise brought a song, and since I was the first to come to thee, I pray thee hear mine first.' Then Gunnlaug turned upon him saying, 'In what ship came thy father forth, that mine was in the little boat towed behind?' 'Nay,' answered Rafn, 'I will not bandy words with thee. The King shall rule.' And Olaf said, 'We will first hear Gunnlaug's song, since he spake first.'

Then Gunnlaug gave forth a noble song with a fair burden to it; and they which stood about the King with one accord said it was a worthy song; all save Rafn, and he spake not. And the King said, 'What sayest thou, Rafn; is the song well done?' 'Well enough,' he answered; 'big words and sounding rhymes; a lack of smoothness; rough and uncouth as the singer's mood.' Thereon the King bade Rafn put forth his song; and when it was done the King said to Gunnlaug, 'What thinkest thou of this?' Gunnlaug answered, 'Lord, it is like him—smug and pretty, like the singer; mean and little, like the singer's soul; but ill befitting thy degree. Knowest thou not, Rafn, a king-song from a yarl-song, but must needs bring thy short-song without burden to offer to a King? Thou art meeter for yarls' company than kings'.' Thus was Rafn put to shame before the King and all his chiefs; for it was reckoned an ill thing to have brought a yarl-song without burden to a king. He said to Gunnlaug, 'I will talk with thee hereafter on this matter, but not now.' And when they met again Rafn said, 'Thou hast cut our friendship in twain; but the day will come when I shall put

thee to no less shame than I have taken at thy hands.' Gunnlaug laughed and in his heart despised the threat.

Soon after, Rafn prayed King Olaf to give him his dismissal, and having received of the King his parting gifts, he set out by sea and came to Iceland. Summer passed, and winter, and summer came again; and Rafn went up to the Thing and there met his kinsman Skapti the Lawman. And he said to him, Wilt thou give me thy help in an undertaking I have in hand?' 'Aye,' answered Skapti, 'if it be lawful and right. What is it?' He said, 'I would fain woo Helga the Fair.' Skapti said, 'That may not be, for she is already the vowed maiden of Gunnlaug of the Wormtongue.' 'The time is out,' answered Rafn, 'and Gunnlaug will not come back. A year ago I left him at King Olaf's court. He is waxed wanton and careth more for new faces than old ones Help me, I pray thee.'

Then Skapti said he would do what he might, and Thorstein Egilson being likewise at the Thing, he went straightway to his booth and laid before him Rafn's suit, urging his good blood, his great wealth, and his strong kinsmen. Thorstein answered, 'I passed my word to Gunnlaug, and that word I will keep, even beyond what holdeth good in law, lest any man reproach me hereafter. It is true three winters have gone already, but the third summer is not past, and Gunnlaug yet may come. Leave the matter till next summer. Meantime I promise nothing, but then I think I should feel free.' So the Thing broke up and men went home.

Summer passed, and winter; and summer came again. Helga sat and sighed; for Gunnlaug came not, and her betrothal to Rafn was openly talked of. And the time of the Thing being again come round, Thorstein went up thither and met Skapti the Lawman there. And Skapti urged him strongly, saying that he was free both in law and honour. But Thorstein answered, 'I have but one daughter, and I am in great fear lest she should become a cause of strife to any; wherefore let me first go and see Gunnlaug's father.' With that he went away and found Illugi the Black, and said to him, 'How sayest thou? In all rightwise meaning am I not now free from my pledge to thy son?' Illugi answered, 'I have nought to say further than that thou hast kept thy troth right truly to me and to my son. Of a surety thou art free. Yet I cannot understand why Gunnlaug comes not back to fetch his bride.' Then Thorstein went again to Skapti and made a covenant with him, that if Gunnlaug came not back, Rafn should wed with Helga on the first day of winter; but if he came

so much as an hour before the wedding, the covenant should be void.

Now to tell why Gunnlaug came not back to claim his bride. That same summer when Rafn left Olaf's court, Gunnlaug departed from Sweden and sailed for England to redeem his pledge to King Æthelred. He landed at London in the autumn according to his promise; and there he found Æthelred in deadly fear because the great Cnut, but newly come to the throne of Denmark in the room of his father Svein, had vowed to war against England. And since Svein had before come down on England many times, and left a strong garrison of Danishmen under Heming, son of Yarl Harald, to keep their footing upon English ground, Æthelred was in a great strait for fear of the Danes, and bound down every man to stay and fight for him; so Gunnlaug for his oath's sake durst not go. However, as it chanced, winter set in, and changed to summer and back again to winter, but no Danes came. Yet Æthelred kept him lingering there far on to another summer, and then finding, spite of all his fears, that Cnut and his Danes came not, Æthelred let Gunnlaug go. And because Gunnlaug knew the time was overpast, he entered into the first ship he could find going northwards; and that was a ship bound for Norway. This was the same summer when Thorstein made the covenant with Skapti.

Gunnlaug feared not now to go to Norway, save for the wasting of the time, inasmuch as some messengers of Yarl Eric at the Orkneys by chance had heard him sing a song in praise of their lord, and Yarl Eric, learning this, had caused it to be made known that there was peace henceforth for Gunnlaug through his realm. So being come to Drontheim he was well greeted of Yarl Eric, at his court at Hladir. But the last ship bound for Iceland had sailed five days before. Nevertheless Yarl Eric, having learned what errand he was on, said that Gunnlaug should not be delayed from his bride by any slackness on his part. And straightway the Yarl had a swift barge put out to sea and manned with the brawniest fellows he could pick. 'Now,' said he, 'row hard for Hallfred Vandræda-Skald's ship; that left the last; and since for five days the wind has blown dead on shore he can have made but little headway.' So they rowed, and by good-hap overtook the ship; and Hallfred took Gunnlaug aboard, and a fair wind arose and bore them away toward Iceland. And all that voyage Gunnlaug made songs of his remembered maiden.

But as ill-luck would have it, though they came to shore two weeks before the first day of winter, they landed in Hraunhaven,

a weary way from Burgfirth. And no sooner were they come out of the ship than a lout of a farmer's son, named Thord, fell to wrestling with the mariners, and got the better of them all, so that it was settled that next day he should match himself against Gunnlaug. On the morrow they had a wrestling bout together, and the end of it was that Thord, having both feet kicked from under him, got a fall upon his back that drave the breath nigh out of him. Nevertheless in that wrestling Gunnlaug put his ancle out of joint. Stout at heart as ever, he tried to walk, but could not, and fell down in a swoon. However, his companions got the ancle into joint again, and having swathed it up, went about the country to borrow horses for their journey. This took some days, for there were twelve of them in all, and so it befell that Gunnlaug and his comrades rode into Burgfirth on that same Saturday night in mid-October when, the wedding being over, Rafn sat at the marriage feast with fair Helga, his bride.

So Gunnlaug came too late upon that winter night. He heard the sound of merriment at Thorstein's house, and saw the cheerful wood fire gleam as he rode by; and knew it was too late. He durst not go in, but rode to his father's house, and there abode apart from his kin. He spake but little; and it seemed as though the winter gloom had fallen upon him.

The bride, folks said, was drooping. And some called to mind the old saw, 'First love is last forgot.'

Many a wooing comes of a wedding. And it befell at Helga's marriage-feast that a man named Sverting wooed Hungerd the daughter of Thorod to be his wife. They were to wed at Yule-tide, and Rafn and Helga were bidden to the marriage. So the feast came to an end and Rafn rode home to Mossfell with his bride.

But Helga had seen folks whispering together, and here and there had caught a word whereby she knew that Gunnlaug had come home. And after that Rafn gat small comfort of his wife. She would pace about her strange new home like something in a cage; her husband's riches she esteemed for naught; and of all the fair raiment and bright jewels which he gave her to put on she recked nothing. But round the farmstead, or away upon the hills, she wandered at her will; least wretched only when alone and free to call on Gunnlaug's name.

Now at Yule-tide Illugi the Black and his son Gunnlaug were bidden to Hungerd's wedding feast, which was to be held at Skaney. And Illugi made ready to go, but Gunnlaug stirred not from the hall. And when they urged him he only answered, '

am not going.' Then said his father to him, 'Sit not here for over grieving. Helga is another's. It is now too late.' 'Aye,' said his son, 'too late.' 'Then get thee up and wear a merry face. 'Tis better than to wear thine heart upon thy sleeve. But waste not time in sorrow for a woman. There are many in the world; and a man like thee may take his choice.' Then Gunnlaug said that he would go; and he arose and came with his father to the wedding-feast at Skaney.

There, on the high seat next the bride, sat Helga the Fair, her cheeks snow-pale, and a wistful longing in her eyes. Gunnlaug looked on her, and the colour flushed into her face as though the sun had shone. He was the comeliest man in all the company, and richly clad in the gold and scarlet raiment which the King of Ireland gave him. Helga stole many a glance at him, whereby the truth of the saying was made plain, 'If a woman fain would hide her love, her eyes must needs betray her.' But not until the end of the feast could they get speech together. Then, while the men were making ready to depart, Helga and Gunnlaug talked for a little space. Bitterly spake Gunnlaug, and he said, 'A curse on them which snatched the joy-cup from our thirsting lips! A curse on them which wedded thee to gold and lands, and cared not that they made an endless winter of our lives!' Tears were in Helga's eyes, and tears in his. But she shook back her heavy golden hair and lifted her lips to him. In both his hands he took the upturned face, and kissed it tenderly. So they talked and talked, in joy and bitterness, until the folk came back arrayed for journeying.

Then Gunnlaug said that he had not yet given a wedding-gift to Helga, and he brought forth the cloak, King Æthelred's gift, that blazed with embroidery of golden thread, so bright that one could scarcely see the scarlet ground for gold; and this he gave to Helga. Then he leapt to horse and rode a-gallop across the farmstead. Rafn, it happened, stood in his way, and had to spring out of the road. And Gunnlaug drew his horse up short upon his haunches, saying, 'Why slink away? Have I yet threatened thee? Or dost thou know that there is something to be settled betwixt us?' Rafn answered, 'What folly is this, that we twain should be at strife for the sake of one woman! I have made my choice. The world is surely wide enough for thee to choose in. Doubtless in lands over sea there are maids as fair as Helga.' Gunnlaug said, 'As to that I care not; there is but one woman in the world for me.' Then he got off his horse, and straightway would have fought with Rafn, but Illugi and Thor-

stein came up and would not suffer it. So Illugi took Gunnlaug home, and Thorstein led Rafn away.

But after she had met Gunnlaug, Helga would have no more fellowship with Rafn; neither took she pleasure in aught save the glittering cloak which Gunnlaug gave her. And Rafn had sorrow and great heaviness; for he loved his wife with all his heart and soul.

Now in summer-time, when men came to the Thing, Gunnlaug came also; and after the lawsuits were done for the first day, he stood up in the midst of the court and cried, 'Is Rafn the son of Onund here?' And when Rafn had answered to his name Gunnlaug said, 'Take notice all men present that since Rafn has got to wife the maiden vowed to me, I call upon him to meet me on the holm of Axe river within three days.' Rafn said that he would be ready. And it being lawful in those days to call a man on holm for wrong-doing, the people from the Thing went over on the third day to Axe-river to see that all was done according to law. The custom was for each man to deal one blow, and he that was first wounded must pay three marks of silver. Rafn being the challenged man, dealt the first. He smote at Gunnlaug's shield so mightily that the sword brake off at the hilt, and the broken blade rebounding, struck Gunnlaug's cheek and drew the blood. Thereupon the kinsmen of both ran in and parted them, and there arose a great disputing, inasmuch as Gunnlaug claimed that Rafn was overcome, he being weaponless; while Rafn declared Gunnlaug, being wounded, to be beaten. Thus until this dispute could be settled, Gunnlaug was not suffered to deal his blow. Wherefore the people went back to the Thing and argued the matter in law; and since they could come to no agreement whatever about it, a law was passed whereby going on holm was thenceforth forbidden. So that was the last holm-gang in Iceland, and Gunnlaug gat no quittance for the blow.

But after this Rafn was ill at ease; for his wife would not endure his love, but grieved always after Gunnlaug; moreover it was noised abroad that she had met him once down by Axe river. And because of these things lightly esteeming his life Rafn came to Gunnlaug, saying, 'There is joy neither for me nor thee while both of us are alive. Wherefore next summer let us fare abroad, where none of our kin can hinder us, and we will fight the quarrel out.' Gunnlaug answered, 'Thou hast a brave heart; and these are welcome words to me.' Wherefore, despite all their kinsmen could do, they fitted out each of them a ship in the summer, and sailed for Norway. But many things befell

both upon the voyage, so that Rafn waited two winters at Lifang in Drontheim and had no tidings of his enemy. And afterward when Gunnlaug reached Norway, and came to Yarl Eric at Hladir, their errand had got abroad and the Yarl forbade them to fight in his dominions. Gunnlaug abode another winter at the Yarl's court, silent and downcast because Rafn would not move out of Lifang, and he durst not fight him there. One day in his walks Gunnlaug came upon a mob of courtiers ringed about two boys who fought in jest. One lad called himself Gunnlaug, the other Rafn; and in their play they said that Icelanders cared nothing to be avenged, and soon forgot their wrongs: and the bystanders laughed and made merry, saying that the two foes when they met would get no more hurt than their namesakes in the ring; with many such-like words.

Gunnlaug looked on and held his peace. But he came to Yarl Eric, saying that he could no longer bear these taunts, but that the ban upon their fighting must be taken off. Now Yarl Eric, having beforetime understood that Rafn was on his way from Lifang into Sweden, scrupled no longer about the matter, but gave him leave to go, and sent guides with him for the journey.

But when Gunnlaug came to Lifang, Rafn, who had tarried there longer than Yarl Eric wotted of, was only a day's journey on his road. So Gunnlaug made haste and followed after him; nevertheless, finding at sundown that he only came to the place where Rafn was the night before, he travelled day and night, and on the third morning, reaching Dingness at sunrise, he looked upon his foe.

Gunnlaug said, 'It is well that I have found thee.' Rafn answered, 'Whether ill or well, a fated thing has come to pass.'

Four men were with Rafn and six with Gunnlaug. And Rafn said, 'Choose whether we two alone shall fight, or whether all of us man to man?' But the men on either side having no mind to stand by and look on, Gunnlaug made his two guides sit down to bide the issue, charging them to take no part in the combat. So five stood up to five, and fought till only one stood up to one. Gunnlaug and Rafn being left alone to fight their mortal strife, rushed furiously together, maddened with the memory of old wrongs. Mighty were the blows they dealt; but Gunnlaug bare the better sword, King Æthelred's gift. At last he made a feint at Rafn's head to make him lift his shield, then swung the sword down athwart Rafn's knee, and hewed his leg from under him. Yet Rafn fell not; he limped away to where a tree had been cut down, and set the bleeding stump upon the tree-root; then cried, 'Fight on; for I must do this battle to the uttermost.'

'Nay,' answered Gunnlaug, 'I will not fight a man so maimed.'

'Had I but a drink of water,' said Rafn, 'I could withstand thee yet.'

Gunnlaug said, 'Betray me not if I fetch it thee.'

And Rafn sware to him, saying, 'I will not betray thee.'

Then Gunnlaug went and dipped up water in his helmet, and brought to him. But Rafn, while he put forth his left hand to take it, with the other drave down his sword into Gunnlaug's skull, and smote him a mortal wound.

'Ill hast thou done,' cried Gunnlaug, 'thus to break thy faith and basely to requite a kindly deed.'

'Yea, I know it,' answered Rafn; 'I have done exceeding shamefully. Yet, how could I die, and give up fair Helga to thine arms?'

So the two men fought on; and in the end Rafn was slain, and Gunnlaug fell back swooning on the ground.

Yarl Eric's two guides washed the wound in Gunnlaug's skull, and when they had bound it up, they gat him on a horse and brought him back to Lifang. There he lay three days; and on the third day, after he had been shriven by the priest, he died.

Now Illugi the Black away in Iceland dreamed that his son Gunnlaug came and stood before him covered with blood; and Onund that same night saw his son Rafn in the like evil case. And when the tidings came and both knew certainly what had befallen, Illugi went to Onund saying, 'Make atonement to me for my son.' Onund answered, 'Are we not both in the same plight? Yet, do I ask thee for atonement for my son?' Then said Illugi, 'My wrath shall evermore pursue thee and thy kin.' That autumn Illugi came with thirty men to Mossfell seeking vengeance. Onund and his household took refuge in the church, but Illugi caught two of Onund's sons; one he slew, and had the legs smitten off the other. And yet again in the spring a son of Illugi slew another of Rafn's kinsmen. But Onund gat no redress for all these slayings.

Helga the Fair sat lonely in her father's house, her mind dwelling always upon Gunnlaug. Across her lap she laid the shining cloak which he had given her, gazing evermore thereon and plucking at the golden threads. So the time went by, and her father wedded her to Thorkel, a busy-minded man, wealthy in land and goods. Still she sat all day with the cloak upon her knees, and plucked the threads out one by one. And as the years passed, children came about the house, and grew up lads and lasses, and gladdened Thorkel's heart. Yet Helga had no other

joy than to gaze upon the fading cloak and pull the scanty threads away. Then, as time wore on, it came to pass that a heavy sickness visited Thorkel's home-folk; and Helga fell ailing, yet would not keep her bed. And so on a Saturday night, as she sat in the fire-hall leaning her head on Thorkel's knees, she said, 'Bring me again the cloak that was Gunnlaug's gift.' And when they had brought it, she spread it out upon her lap as at other times, to gaze upon it. Then she sat up and plucked the last gold threads away, and sank back dead into her husband's arms.

Burnt Njal.

I. THE STORY OF GUNNAR, NJAL'S FRIEND.

WHEN Harald Fairhair began to rule over Norway, he put away the old laws, and made a decree that freemen should henceforth pay taxes and always be the king's men, instead of rendering service only in time of need as heretofore. For this cause many freemen strove long against the King, until, being worsted continually, they sold all their possessions and came out from the land. Faring away to Iceland, they made themselves a new home. Thence they roved the sea for plunder, and oftentimes came down and harried the coasts of Norway because of their bitterness against the King.

Some threescore years after the Norsemen were come out to Iceland, there arose amongst them a man very wise in law whose name was Njal. He dwelt at Bergthorsknoll, and was wealthy and gentle-minded, and greatly looked up to of all folk; his match for law was not to be found, and he was foresighted, knowing things to come. Njal was ever ready to give counsel, and when he counselled a man in aught, it was sure to be for the best. His face was handsome but beardless; he had to wife Bergthora, a brave-hearted woman, and they had three strong sons, named Skarp-hedinn, Grim, and Helgi, and as many daughters.

Now though Njal was greatly beloved of all men, he had one friend dearer to him than any, and that was Gunnar of Lithend the most matchless warrior in Iceland. Tall and straight and strong, Gunnar had bright blue eyes and ruddy cheeks, and thick fair hair which fell in curls. None would contend with him at any warlike game, for when he handled sword three blades seemed flashing in the air at once, and he had equal skill to fight with either hand. With the bow he never missed his mark. He could outleap, outrun, outswim all men. He was dauntless as a lion yet gentle and courteous withal, a fast friend, and a bountiful man. He and Njal had long been friends; Njal advised him in all that he undertook, and they vowed that nothing should ever sunder their friendship.

Now Gunnar being newly come home from faring abroad, having gotten both fame and treasure, rode to the Thing, clad in scarlet clothes and with a gold ring on his arm. And as he wandered among the booths there came forth a fair woman arrayed in a red kirtle and over all a cloak of needlework. Her hair fell over her bosom in long locks, and she had turned the ends in beneath her silver girdle. She came to Gunnar, and with nought of bashfulness straightway began to ask concerning his voyages and battles, saying that she was minded to talk with him. She said that her name was Hallgerda, and that she was Hauskuld's daughter. So the two fell talking long together, and presently Gunnar asked if she were wed. 'Nay,' she answered, 'there are few men bold enough to wed with me. Folks say, too, I am not easy to please in husbands.' Then said Gunnar, 'If I were bold enough should I displease?' She answered, 'If this be truly thy mind, go ask me from my father.'

Then went Gunnar away and sought out Hauskuld's booth. Hauskuld and his brother Hrut were within, and Gunnar having told his errand, Hauskuld said to his brother, 'How sayest thou, Hrut? For I find it hard to answer in this matter.' Then spake Hrut, 'Gunnar, thou art a brave fellow and all that is to be desired for a match; but I will not cheat thee. Hallgerda is older than thou, and has been twice wed aforetime. She is a widow with an evil name, in that she compassed the death of both the husbands she has had already. Each smote her on the face, and ever mindful of the blow she rested not till Thiostolf her foster-father slew them. Hallgerda is no match for a man of unblemished fame.' But Gunnar made light of it, saying that he was content to abide by the bargain. Wherefore Hrut said, 'It is plainly of no avail to reason with a man whose heart is set upon a woman; and if ye two are fain to run the risk, it concerns none else.' So Hallgerda was sent for and betrothed to Gunnar; and on a set day the marriage was made at Lithend.

One winter, being bidden to a feast at Njal's homestead, Gunnar brought his wife Hallgerda with him. She sat herself unbidden in the chief seat upon the cross bench, and when Thorhalla, the wife of Njal's youngest son, came into the hall and walked up to the bench, Hallgerda spread out her robes and would not give her place. Then came Bergthora to her, saying, 'Give place to my son's wife; for I will be ruler in this my house,' and therewith sat Thorhalla beside her. But presently when Bergthora went round with water to wash the hands of the guests, Hallgerda took hold of her hand and reviled her, saying, 'Thou hast hang-

nails and thieves' fingers—a fitting wife in sooth for beardless Njal.' 'Aye,' said Bergthora, 'and being so fitly matched we dwell in peace together. To thee it may seem strange that a woman should live happily with one lord so long, and never have plotted his death.' Then Hallgerda cried out to her husband, saying, 'Gunnar, avenge me of this woman's slander.' Straightway strode Gunnar across the hall and said to his wife, 'Make thyself ready and go home. Beneath thine own roof thou mayest wrangle to thine heart's content, but thou shalt not befool me into breaking friendship with Njal, whom I honour more than any man.' So Gunnar took her home. But thenceforward Hallgerda sought how she might requite Bergthora for this saying.

Between the homesteads of Gunnar and Njal was a wood wherein both hewed timber as they needed. And it fell out while Gunnar was away upon a journey that Hallgerda sent her woodman out to slay Bergthora's woodman in the forest. The man did her bidding, and Hallgerda looked that this should embroil her husband with Njal. But far from this, when Gunnar heard it, he went to Njal and said, 'My wife and one of her men have slain a carle of thine. But why should we be ill friends because of it? Put a price upon his life and I will pay it thee.' Njal answered, 'I foresee that thou wilt be sore tried with this woman, but our friendship shall not be broken at her hands. Thou shalt pay me twelve ounces of silver for the slaying; or, if the price seem too great to thee, make thine own award; I am content.' So the money was paid. Nevertheless Bergthora was not content till she could be avenged. Wherefore she likewise sent out a man who slew Hallgerda's woodman. Njal came to Gunnar and paid him back the price he had received, but never a word of anger passed between them. After that the feud went on for years between the women, and there were many slayings both of house carles and freemen on either side; yet for all this the wives sought vainly to stir their husbands up to strife. Njal and Gunnar always met, and paid or took the price which either awarded, and their friendship only grew the closer for the contentions of their women.

A Swede named Sigmund came over the sea, and Gunnar gave him winter lodging. But while he abode in the house Hallgerda won him to her will, and set him to lie in wait to slay Thord, who was one of Njal's kinsmen. Gunnar got an inkling of what was brewing, and sent straightway to warn Njal of it. The evening that Njal got the tidings he was walking with Thord on

the highway when suddenly Thord stopped and pointing with his finger, cried, 'See there!' 'I see nothing,' answered Njal. 'Nothing!' said Thord; 'what is that goat which lieth in the road all dabbled with blood?' 'No goat is there,' said Njal; 'but a fetch perchance that goeth before thee, to warn thee of doom.' So Njal bade Thord ride away east for safety. But a flooded river which he could not cross delayed him, and on the third night from the time when he saw the fetch, Thord fell dead by Sigmund's hand.

Njal's sons were eager to avenge the slaying of their kinsman upon Gunnar and all his house, but Njal still made the peace and took a money price of two hundreds in silver.

Yet Sigmund tarried on at the homestead at Lithend, and Hallgerda in a little while by her blandishments and fair words prevailed upon him to make a song befouling Njal and his sons, and to sing it where it should come to their ears. Njal heard of it and bade his sons take no heed thereof. But one night when he went to bed he missed his sons' spears and shields from the wall, and said to his wife Bergthora, 'Where is Skarp-hedinn? And where are his brothers Helgi and Grim?' She answered, 'They went out awhile ago a-fishing.' Njal said, 'Men seldom fish with spear and shield.' That night was Sigmund slain. Howbeit Njal made atonement to Gunnar with the same two hundreds in silver which he had received; and they passed their words always to settle any matter which came between them in like friendly fashion.

Now one year there fell a great dearth upon the land; the sheep and cattle died for want of pasture, and the scanty corn crops withered in the ear. Gunnar shared his hay and meat among the people so long as they lasted; but his hand was so liberal and the need so great, that presently he began to be in want. Then Gunnar went to Otkell, a rich man but very covetous, who dwelt at Kirkby, and sought to buy food of him. Otkell had a friend named Skamkell, on whose counsel he always acted, a great liar and lickspittle, who fawned about him and puffed him up with evil counsels. And being advised of this fellow, Otkell said to Gunnar, 'In sooth I have stores in plenty, but I am minded neither to sell nor give to thee; so go thy way.' Then the men which came with Gunnar urged him to take what he needed by force and lay down the worth of it. But Gunnar scorned to do so, and rode away. Howbeit Njal heard that he was in want of food, and without waiting to be asked laded twenty horses with hay and meat and sent them to Gunnar, saying, 'A

friend's gift to a friend; and, by our friendship, I pray thee in time to come seek all that thou mayest lack from me alone.' Gunnar sent back word, 'Good are thy gifts, but better than all gifts is thy friendship.'

But Gunnar's wife was stirred up to anger against Otkell because of his avarice. She had a thrall named Malcolm whom she had bought not long before from Otkell, and she sent out this man at night with two horses, charging him to break open Otkell's storehouse, and having laden the horses with provisions, to burn down the storehouse so as to hide all trace of theft. So Malcolm fared away to his old master's homestead at Kirkby. The house-dog knew him and did not bark. Malcolm laded the horses with butter and cheese, and burnt the storehouse to the ground. But going home, one of his shoe-thongs breaking, he took out his knife, and having cut a new thong from the leathern belt about his waist, went on his way. When he was come back to Lithend he missed his knife and belt, and knew that he had left them on Otkell's land, yet durst not go back to fetch them.

Next day as Hallgerda set out the food upon the board, Gunnar said, 'Whence came the cheese and butter? We have made no such things on the farm for many a month.' Hallgerda said, 'It ill befitteth a man to busy himself about housekeeping. Eat and ask no questions.' But he said, 'Nay, I will be no partaker with thieves,' and waxing angry, gave her a slap on the face, sent the food from the table, and had meal brought in instead. 'That,' said he, 'is honest food, for it comes from Njal.' Hallgerda grew sullen and said, 'One day I shall make thee remember that blow.'

Otkell was not a little vexed for the burning of his storehouse, but wist not how it came to pass till Skamkell brought a knife and belt which he had found hard by the place. 'Knowest thou aught of these things?' said Skamkell. 'Surely I do,' said Otkell; 'they belong to Malcolm the thrall whom I sold to Gunnar.' 'Then keep thy counsel,' said this busybody, 'till I get to the bottom of the matter.' With that Skamkell went away to a man of no little cunning, named Mord, who had always envied Gunnar, and asked his help. Mord said, 'Give me three marks of silver, and I will promise to find whether any of the goods are in Gunnar's house.' So the bargain being made, Mord sent out women to go from house to house peddling small wares, and bade them take note of what they received from each house in return for their goods. In a fortnight's time the women

came back with big bundles of things which they had gathered. When Mord looked over the bundles he found about half a cheese cut in thick slices. 'Where got you this?' he asked. 'From Hallgerda at Lithend; she was very bountiful to us,' the women said. 'Aye,' thought Mord, 'folks are always liberal with what is not their own;' so taking the cheese to Otkell's house he bade him bring out his wife's cheese-mould. Then he laid the slices together and set them in the mould, and they fitted it in every way.

But while Otkell and Skamkell were scheming how best to break the matter to Gunnar, who should come in but Gunnar himself, who said, 'I find that thou hast suffered a great loss through the plotting of my wife and that worthless thrall I bought of thee. Wherefore I come to make amends, and I make thee this offer: let the best men round the country-side settle the matter.' But Skamkell said, 'Seldom an offer sounds so fair and yet is so unjust; for all men hold by thee, whereas Otkell has few friends.' Gunnar said, 'Then I will utter an award myself. I am willing to restore double for all that Otkell has lost.' 'Nay,' answered Skamkell, 'this shall not be, for it is not thy right to make an award, but Otkell's.' Gunnar said, 'I am not dealing with thee, Skamkell, but with Otkell. Come now, Otkell, thou hast refused my two offers, but I would keep friends with thee. Utter an award thyself; whatsoever it be I will abide by it.' But Otkell turned to Skamkell and whispered, 'How shall I answer?' Skamkell whispered back, 'Say nay, and that thou wouldst rather leave it in the hands of men of law.' Wherefore Otkell answered, 'The offer is not amiss, but I cannot make an award till I have seen Gizur the White and Geir the priest.' 'Well,' said Gunnar, 'I have made three good offers by which I am ready to abide, but I shall do no more,'—and therewith rode away.

Now instead of going himself Otkell sent Skamkell to see the lawmen. And when Gizur the White and Geir the priest heard the man's tale they said, 'No one could have made fairer offers than Gunnar has done; let Otkell choose which of them he will: it is no case for law.' Howbeit Skamkell cared little to take this message to his master since it condemned his own counsels; wherefore being come back to Otkell he lied to him and said that the lawmen advised him to summon Hallgerda for stealing the victuals, and Gunnar for partaking of them. So a suit was set on foot; but when it came on for hearing at the Thing and the truth was testified to by Gizur the White and Geir the priest,

Otkell was put to shame, and the end of it was that Gunnar, being left to make his own award, stood up and thus uttered it: 'For the storehouse and the food I will pay thee, Otkell, the full price. I will pay no fine for the thrall, because thou didst hide his faults, but I award him back to thee. And now, since thou hast summoned me wrongfully and in mockery, I award myself no less a sum than the house and the burnt stones were worth. So there will be no need for money to pass between us.' Folk thought it rather hard on Otkell; but none pitied him, since all believed that he had brought it on himself. So hands were shaken on the bargain, and Gunnar rode away with great honour.

One day in the springtime Gunnar was sowing corn in a newly ploughed field on his farmstead, and as he scattered the grain from the sieve in his left hand he stooped over his work heeding nothing but his sowing. Otkell came riding a-gallop over the field and saw not Gunnar till he was close upon him. He pulled the bridle athwart and swerved his horse, but in that moment Gunnar stood upright, and Otkell drave one of his spurs by misadventure into Gunnar's ear and gashed it open. Howbeit, Otkell stayed not, but rode on; and Skamkell hearing of it, noised the affair abroad, and said that Gunnar had shed tears at the pain.

Gunnar said naught, but went indoors and took down his sword and spear and shield and helm. He took from the nail where it hung a great war-bill which he won in battle with Hallgrim. A mighty weapon it was; and there was this about it, that whensoever a man was to be slain with that bill something sang in it so loud that it might be heard a long way off. And when Gunnar had armed himself and had gotten the bill in his hands he leapt upon his horse and rode away. As he went, his mother Ramveig from an upper room heard a shrill singing in the war-bill, and went and awakened Gunnar's brother Kolskegg, saying, 'Rise up and follow after Gunnar, for men will die to-day; the bill gave out the death-sound.'

At Rangriver, against the ford at Hof, Gunnar and Kolskegg came upon Otkell and Skamkell riding with six men. Gunnar and his brother got off their horses, and called to the others to do the like and guard themselves. Otkell and his band were nowise loth, seeing how the numbers were, and quickly gathered about the two. Then flashed Gunnar's sword so swiftly that no eye could follow it; he smote down two of the men, then took the bill in both his hands, and thrusting Skamkell through the midst,

lifted him up and cast his body headlong in the muddy ford. Otkell smote with his sword at Gunnar's knees, but Gunnar leapt in the air and avoided the blade, and before Otkell could recover himself the bill was through his chest. So Gunnar slew six and Kolskegg two; and they left all eight men dead about the ford.

Gunnar rode straightway off to Njal to tell what had happened. And Njal said, 'This need not turn out either for thy loss or for thy dishonour so far as I can foresee, though it will be the beginning of many manslayings.' Then Gunnar prayed him for some wise counsel to guide him in time to come; and Njal said, 'See to it in all thy quarrels that thou slay no more than one man of the same stock; so shalt thou come to be an old man; but when thou forgettest this warning thou shalt have but a little while to live.' And Gunnar said, 'Since thou knowest so well what will happen to other men, canst thou tell what shall be the manner of thine own death?' Njal answered, 'Yea, I know it.' 'How will it be?' said Gunnar. 'It will be a death,' he said, 'more dreadful than any man would think, neither would any believe it if he were told.'

When the suits for these slayings were laid at the Thing, Njal helped Gunnar with his wise counsels, and the award was that Otkell's death should be set off against the wound which Gunnar got from the spur; Skamkell, for his lying and for stirring up the strife, was to be unatoned; and for the rest of the men fines were to be paid according to their worth.

After this Gunnar and his brother had a battle with fourteen men, which arose out of a horse-fight, all of whom they slew; and Njal by his wisdom settled matters at the Thing so that Gunnar suffered little loss and got great honour. But Thorgeir, a kinsman of one of the men that was slain, went to Mord and promised him money if he would show some way whereby he might have vengeance upon Gunnar. Mord said, 'This I know, that Njal has foretold that whenever Gunnar slays twice in the same stock it shall prove his bane. Now Otkell has left a son who is both strong and brave-hearted; wherefore I counsel thee to drag him into a quarrel with Gunnar; and when ye two are together in the affray, do thou guard thyself and hold back; so Gunnar shall slay Otkell's son and accomplish his own doom; but thou shalt flee away.'

So Thorgeir went away to work out this plot. By the gift of a spear inlaid with gold he first made friends with Otkell's son, who being himself true-hearted and guileless judged others to be the like. Then Thorgeir raked up a matter long gone by, about

a cornfield which Gunnar was to have given Otkell as atonement for an old slaying, but which he afterwards redeemed with a money price. Little by little he wrought upon the young man's mind, and made him feel aggrieved at Gunnar's keeping back a piece of land the worth whereof was now threefold what Otkell got for it. So at last Thorgeir hardened the heart of Otkell's son against Gunnar, and they both agreed to fall upon him unawares. But they durst not seek him at home, for Gunnar had a faithful hound named Sam, which was gifted with more than a man's wit to know a friend from a foe, and would lay down his life for his master. Wherefore they got four and twenty men together and made an ambush by Rangriver, where they lay in wait till Gunnar should ride down to see after his house-carles working across the ford.

Now as Gunnar rode down that way with his brother Kolskegg, he perceived blood sweat out upon his bill and stand in drops upon the blade. And while he marvelled he espied men rising from an ambush. Gunnar strung his bow and slew many of them with his arrows, and wounded many more before they could come up with him. Then clutched he the war-bill in his hands and ran upon the men. He hewed one man's legs from under him; another he smote in twain; but the rest drew back from the sweep of the bill. Then Thorgeir egged on Otkell's son, saying, 'Little would one think that thou hadst a father to avenge.' With that Otkell's son ran in and drave his spear into Gunnar's shield. With a twist of his shield Gunnar brake the spear-head off; then he thrust his bill through the youth's body, and hoisting him aloft flung him lifeless far out into Rangriver. Then Thorgeir and his fellows turned and fled.

Njal was very heavy at heart when Gunnar told him of the affray, and he said, 'From this time forth beware of thyself; for thou hast slain twice in one stock, and evil will surely come of it. But above all see thou hold to the terms of the settlement which shall be made.'

The suits being brought, it was agreed on both sides to take the award of twelve men. And they gave it that money fines should be paid for all the slayings, but that Gunnar and Kolskegg must go abroad three winters, or in default might be slain by the suitors or their kinsmen without atonement. So Gunnar and Kolskegg, having passed their words to go abroad, went home and got things together for seafaring, and took their passage in a ship. And all being ready, the two brothers bade their mother farewell and rode away from the house. But they

had scarce passed their own boundaries when Gunnar turned in his saddle to take a last look at his home. And he said, 'How fair is Lithend in the summer sunshine! Never has it seemed to me so fair. The corn-fields are yellowing to harvest. They are carrying the hay from the home-field—how sweet it smells! I cannot leave the old place, brother; by my life I will not leave it!' Then Kolskegg urged him, saying, 'Do not so shamefully as to go back and break the atonement left to thy good faith; for surely if thou dost it shall befall even as Njal has foretold.' He said, 'I care not what may come of it. Lithend has grown so dear to me to-day I cannot leave it.' Kolskegg answered, 'Brother, if so thy mind is set, abide here. But I will keep my pledge and fare abroad; neither shall I ever return more; for this resolve will cost thee thy life, and then there will be nothing left in Lithend to bring me back again.' So the brothers parted; Kolskegg went to his ship, and Gunnar turned his horse's head and came home.

It soon got whispered about that Gunnar abode still at Lithend, and would not go out of Iceland; and at the next Thing he was proclaimed an outlaw. Then Thorgeir and Mord and Gizur the White gathered together forty of the kinsmen of those men whom Gunnar had slain, and planned how best to attack him. Njal heard of it and came and warned Gunnar of what was brewing, and said, 'Let my sons, Skarp-hedinn and Grim, come and abide with thee in the house; for they will both give their lives for thee.' But Gunnar said, 'Nay; thy sons shall not be slain for my sake; that were a poor requital for thy goodness to me. But I pray thee, if anything befall me, see after my son Hogni, who is dear to me: I say nothing of my other son Grani, whom I had by Hallgerda, for he is his mother's boy, and has ever been froward to my mind.' Njal promised him, and went his way. Gunnar scorned to remain in hiding; he rode to the Things and all other meetings of men as aforetime, and held his head on high. None of his friends spake of his outlawry, or turned their backs on him; and none of his foes for very shame durst lay hands on him openly.

But Mord and Thorgeir and Gizur the White, with their forty fellows, gathered about Gunnar's homestead one day before sunrise. They heard the baying of the hound, and knowing that they must first destroy him, they sent six of their band to go and secure the bonder who lived on the next farm. Him they fetched from his bed and bound with cords, threatening to take his life unless he would go and bring them the dog. The man went, and

called the hound by name; Sam knew him, and fawned and leapt about him whilst he unloosed the chain. The hound followed him down the pathway and far across the farmstead till they came upon the band of men. Then seeing how he had been betrayed, the dog flew at the bonder, pinned him by the throat and tare him to pieces. But the men smote him with their axes as he worried the bonder's flesh, and one of the axe-blades sank into his brain. The hound lifted his head, and giving a strange howl like the cry of a man in despair, set off and ran, and coming to the homestead, found his way into the chamber where Gunnar slept. He leapt upon the bed and licked his master's face; then stretched himself by his master's side, and died. Gunnar awoke and said, 'Sorely hast thou been treated, Sam, my fosterling; and I take it as a warning that our two deaths shall not be far apart.'

When the men were come nigh the house they would fain know whether Gunnar was at home, and Thorgrim the Easterling said he would climb up the pillars of the house and look into Gunnar's chamber. But when Thorgrim was come up under the roof-beams Gunnar saw him peeping through the window-slits, and thrusting out his bill smote him through the middle; so the man fell down backwards to the ground. Gizur ran to Thorgrim, and said, 'Tell us, is Gunnar at home?' Thorgrim answered, 'I cannot tell; but this I know right well, that his bill is at home;' and so saying he died.

Gunnar gathered a pile of arrows before him and shot out from the windows at his foes. No arrow missed its mark. Then the men drew back and took shelter in the outhouses, and anon came out to hack at the doorways of the homestead. But the house was strongly built of timber, and Gunnar's arrows searched them through and through, so that they could not abide these onslaughts long together.

Presently Gizur said, 'Lo, I saw Gunnar put forth his arm from the window and take an arrow off the roof; he must be running short of shafts within doors. Now let us make a fresh attack.' Then by Mord's counsel they fetched ropes, and having thrown them over the roof-beams, they made fast the other ends to a rock, and twisting them tight with levers dragged the roof off from the hall. Still Gunnar shot out arrows and kept the men back, till one of them stealthily climbed the house-pillars, and smiting in at the window with his sword, cut Gunnar's bowstring asunder. In a moment Gunnar's bill was through his body and the man fell backwards dead upon the ground; but

others clambered up, and it was hard work to guard the roofless loft on all four sides from them which came. Then Gunnar called to his wife Hallgerda and said, 'Quick, now! Take two locks of thy long hair, and do thou and my mother twist them into a bowstring for me.' His wife laughed coldly. 'Does aught hang upon it?' said she. 'Aye,' he answered, 'my life hangs on it; for with naught but my bow can I keep these men at bay. Quick, the bowstring!' Then said Hallgerda, 'Thinkest thou I have forgotten the blow on the face which thou gavest me? What is it to me whether thou holdest out for a short while or a long? And so thy life hangs on my hair! Thy mother Rannveig's is too short!' She loosed her ample locks and shook them to her knees—laughed bitterly in Gunnar's face, and went down to the hall.

Gunnar flung the useless bow aside and caught his bill in both hands. A stout defence he made; for the first eight that swarmed up the walls fell wounded nigh to death; but his foes were too many, and in time they hemmed him in against a corner of the loft and slew him there. For all that, when the suitors came to reckon up their loss, they found sixteen sorely wounded and two dead. Then came Gizur the White and some of the band to Gunnar's mother Rannveig, saying, 'We pray thee grant us earth enough wherein to lay our two dead men.' Rannveig answered, 'You are welcome enough; and I am only sorry that I have not to grant it to all of you.' And Gizur said to his fellows, 'Come away, and take no heed of her words, for she has had a great loss.' And he charged them all that they should not spoil or rob anything about the place. So they buried their dead and went quietly away.

Rannveig after this grew so bitter against Hallgerda that there was no abiding in the house; wherefore Hallgerda took her son Grani and fled away to Gritwater where Thrain her son-in-law dwelt, who had wedded her daughter by her first husband. So Gunnar's son Hogni took to the farm at Lithend. They raised a great cairn over Gunnar and set him upright upon a chair, with all his weapons by him save the bill, which Rannveig said was to be kept for the man that should avenge him. But for many nights such strange noises were heard from Gunnar's cairn, that at length Hogni fetched Njal's son Skarp-hedinn, and they two went at midnight to see what it might betoken. It was a clear cold night, and fleecy clouds drifted over the bright moon and stars. And as they beheld, lo, it seemed as if the cairn stood open, and Gunnar had turned himself within the cairn: the moonlight fell

upon his face, and he was merry, singing a battle-song which might be heard a long way off; four lights burned round about him, but cast no shadows. As they gazed and listened, the moon was hidden by a cloud; and when it shone again the song was done and the cairn was shut.

Then Hogni took Skarp-hedinn home with him, and being come into the house Hogni laid his hand upon Gunnar's bill which hung up in its place. As soon as he touched it there was a singing in the bill, and Rannveig sprang up, saying, 'Thou art he that shall bear it to avenge thy father, and already has the bill spoken of one man's death or more.' Hogni took the weapon and went out, Skarp-hedinn going with him. That night they came upon Thorgeir and three other of the suitors. Two died by the bill and two by Skarp-hedinn's axe. Mord they found likewise, but he went upon his knees and begging for mercy offered all he had for life. So Skarp-hedinn took an atonement from him at a great price in money for his share in Gunnar's death and let him go.

II. THE BURNING OF NJAL.

Now Njal's two younger sons Grim and Helgi joined themselves with some other men and went sea-roving about the Orkneys where they met with many adventures. Once, when they were beset by thirteen ships, a viking with ten ships, who chanced to steer that way, saw how hard they were put to it, and striking in on the weaker side fought a great battle and drave off their enemies. This viking wore a helm of gold upon his head, scarce brighter than the golden hair which fell upon his shoulders; his face was frank and handsome, and he fought with a great two-handed sword named Life-luller. He told them he was called Kari, and that he was the son of Solmund. And from that time a great friendship sprang up between him and Njal's sons; and many times thenceforward Kari succoured them and fought at their side both on sea and land.

After a while the brothers left Kari, and sailing east came to Norway. There they fell in with Thrain who had wedded Hallgerda's daughter. Thrain had been some winters in Norway serving Yarl Hacon, and with his war-ship, the Vulture, had gained no little wealth and renown. Grim and Helgi having

known Thrain in Iceland, renewed their fellowship with him, and were often aboard his ship when he went out a-raiding. It happened one day as the Vulture lay out in the offing ready for a cruise that Thrain and Njal's sons were just putting off from shore in a little boat to take the water-casks aboard, when a man came racing to the water-side, and sprang down upon the shingle, crying, 'Help me, good men and true! Yarl Hacon and his men are at my heels, and they will kill me like a dog.' Helgi looked at the fellow and said, 'Take him not in, Thrain, for if I misjudge not he is an unlucky man to have to do with. Besides, it were an unseemly deed towards thy friend Yarl Hacon.' Thrain heeded not, but turning to the man, asked, 'Who art thou? What hast thou done?' He answered, 'My name is Hrapp. I have the blood of many men upon my hands; I have beguiled the daughter of my friend; I have burned the shrines of the gods, and plundered them of their jewels.' 'Hast thou the jewels with thee?' said Thrain. 'Aye,' said Hrapp. 'Give them to me, and for that price I will take thee aboard.' 'Not all,' the man pleaded; 'good master, let me keep a portion for myself.' Thrain dashed his oar into the water, saying, 'All or none; do as you will. But listen!' Hrapp listened, and heard the tramp of horses' feet and the hue and cry of his pursuers. He said 'I have no choice; take all,' and leaping into the boat, lay down beneath the benches at the bottom. The boat shoved off. Yarl Hacon and his men came down upon the beach and hailed her, but she made no sign. The boat rowed to the ship and the men went on board.

Not a ripple was on the water; not a breath of wind in the sky. 'A plague on it!' cried Thrain, 'we must lie here at anchor till a breeze gets up, for we are too short-handed to man the oars. And where is this man to hide? For of a surety Hacon will search the vessel.' Then he took an empty water-cask, and putting Hrapp therein lowered the cask overboard so that it should lie under the shadow of the stern.

Very soon Yarl Hacon put off in a barge and came to the ship. He said to Thrain, 'We seek a man named Hrapp who has done us all manner of evil. Deliver him up to us.' Thrain answered, 'He is not here; I know naught of him. Many a winter have I served thee well, and I deem it in nowise a fit return that thou shouldst charge me thus. Howbeit, seek him if thou art so minded.' The Yarl sought but could not find him. Then he bespake Njal's sons, saying, 'I know that ye are men of truth; tell me where this man is hidden.' But though they held not

with Thrain they counted it shame to betray him; so they answered, 'Go ask of Thrain, or seek him for thyself; we will have naught to do with the matter.' And with that they took the ship's boat and rowed off to their own vessel. The Yarl likewise went away, doubting and ill-satisfied. But no sooner had he got back to land and espied the water-cask than he put off again. Thrain watched him coming, and taking Hrapp up out of the cask, stowed him away in a sack amongst the ship's lading. Wherefore Hacon came and turned the cask bottom up, and routed the ship over a second time, but could not find the man he sought. Yet when he got ashore again it seemed to come into his mind that Hrapp must be among the sacks, and a third time he came aboard. He said, 'I know the man is here, and when I am ashore I seem to see it plainly, but aboard the vessel thou dost balk me. Give him up, or it will be worse for thee.' 'Well,' said Thrain, 'if thou art bent on making me out a liar, seek for thyself, I shall not help thee.' This time they had folded Hrapp in the sail which was brailed up to the yard. The Yarl searched the vessel through, and came away dissatisfied; but scarce had he got ashore when a breeze sprang up, the Vulture spread her sails, and immediately Hacon saw Hrapp in the rigging.

Straightway Hacon made ready four war-ships, and put out to sea after Thrain, but the Vulture had a good start and got clean off. Being very vexed thereat, Hacon cruised about till he fell in with the ship wherein Njal's sons were, and feeling assured that they were privy to Hrapp's hiding, he gave them battle, and after a long fight took Grim and Helgi prisoners, and having bound them flung them in the hold to wait for death. But in the night Grim espied an axe lying edge up in the hold, and rolling himself over thereto he cut his cords, and then went and loosed his brother. At daybreak they saw an island scarce a mile away, and getting softly over the ship's side they dropped into the sea and swam to land. A ship had put in thither for water, and to their joy they found it was the ship of their friend Kari, Solmund's son. Yarl Hacon steered in shore and asked Kari if he was harbouring Njal's sons. 'I am,' said Kari. 'Wilt thou give them up to me?' 'That will I not,' said he; 'they are my friends even as I am thine, and thou hast misjudged them. But I am ready to make the peace betwixt you; and when thou shalt learn of a truth that these men had no hand in deceiving thee it shall be left to thee to award them recompense for the despite done to them.' So when Yarl Hacon knew the truth he made full atonement, and they all became friends.

After that Njal's sons roved the sea with Kari, and went harrying about Anglesea and the southern isles. And when they had gotten much booty, Grim and Helgi constrained Kari to come out to Iceland and abide at their house. And so he did; and in the springtime Kari wedded Helga, one of Njal's daughters, and there was the greatest of good fellowship betwixt him and all Njal's house, both then and ever afterwards.

Now Thrain had likewise come home, and abode at Gritwater with Hallgerda his mother-in-law; Hrapp also dwelt with him. And there was very little love between that household and Njal's. For Thrain was sore against Helgi and Grim because they had not lied for him over Hrapp's hiding, but had made friends with Hacon at his expense. Hrapp hated both brothers because they withstood his being taken into Thrain's ship. Hallgerda bear yet in her mind the memory of her old feud with Bergthora, Njal's wife; but Njal and all his sons she hated for another cause. In wedding Gunnar she had looked that, with the bravest and most dauntless man in Iceland for a husband, every fancied slight to her should have been avenged with blood. Instead of that, in all things Gunnar had been peacefully ruled by Njal; for Njal he became a man whom she despised; for Njal's light-given meat he had disdained the food which she had got by theft. Njal made her husband a man of whom she would fain be rid; but being rid of him she hated the man that made her content to see him die. The ill-will of Thrain and Hrapp might soon have cooled, but Hallgerda fanned it day by day. So time went on, and Thrain would talk of Njal as 'that old beardless fool,' and when he met Njal's sons he spake not to them. There was only one in all Thrain's household untainted with bad feeling towards Njal, and that was Hauskuld, Thrain's son, a generous-minded youth who bare no living soul ill-will.

Grim and Helgi were annoyed beyond measure at Thrain's coldness, the more so after what they had suffered for his sake; and Skarp-hedinn their elder brother hearing continually of Thrain's ill words grew restless, and fell to whetting his great two-handed axe War-Ogress. Skarp-hedinn was a tall gaunt man, with a rugged face as pale as ashes; his hair was short and crisp; his front teeth stood out from his mouth; he was impatient and quick of speech, but very valiant. Skarp-hedinn would straightway have gone with his brothers and fallen on Thrain, but Njal counselled them all to forbear. He said, 'Ye have none of you with your own ears heard Thrain speak evil

concerning us; it may be idle tale-bearing; wait and see.' 'Not so,' said Skarp-hedinn, 'but we will go to Thrain's house and set all doubt at rest.' Thereupon Njal's sons and Kari their brother-in-law rode over to Gritwater; and being come to the homestead they saw Hallgerda standing in the porch; but she gave them no word of greeting. Skarp-hedinn said, 'Perchance we are not welcome here?' Hallgerda answered, 'None within this house will say that ye are welcome.'

'Well,' said Skarp-hedinn, 'our errand is not with thee.' So they entered the house and came to Thrain. Then spake Helgi, 'I am come to know if thou wilt make amends for what befell me and my brother Grim in Norway because of thee?' Thrain answered, 'Canst thou measure thy manhood by naught but money?' Helgi said, 'A word from us to Yarl Hacon would have cost thy life; yet we spake not that word; and for that cause we suffered hardships.' Then Hrapp said, 'Luck ruled it that ye had the stripes while we got free; tempt your luck no further lest the like befall you all again.' Skarp-hedinn said to his brother, 'Bandy no words with a man who has robbed the shrines of the gods.' 'Hold thy tongue, Skarp-hedinn,' cried Hrapp, 'or I will drive my axe into thy skull.' Skarp-hedinn scoffed at him, saying, 'We shall see before long which shall scatter gravel over the other's head.' Then Hallgerda cried aloud, 'Away with you, sons of a beardless fool, who grew your beards as we grow hay upon the meadows, by dunging them. Ye Dungbeards get you gone!' In like manner also did Hrapp revile them, but Thrain held his peace.

Njal's sons came home and told their father. And their mother Bergthora hearing it, said, 'Ye have borne these words? And yet I see no blood upon your axes? Verily folk will say that my sons have not the heart to lift their weapons.'

But not many days after, Njal's sons and Kari set out in quest of their revilers. It was winter time, and as they wended along by the side of the river Fleet, they saw Thrain and Hrapp with six men on the other bank. The ice being broken away from the side of the river where the brothers were, they could not get across till, perceiving a tongue of ice further down which stretched to the shore, they hasted thither, all save Skarp-hedinn, who lagged behind to tie his shoe. Thrain and his fellows from the other side espying them came out upon the ice, Thrain foremost. Then Skarp-hedinn had no patience to go after his brothers, but took a run and a spring from the bank, and leaping twelve ells across the water on to the sheet of ice, came sliding down on

Thrain swift as a bird flies. Down came the axe cleaving Thrain's skull to the jaw-teeth; and before the others could get a blow at him, Skarp-hedinn had slid to where his brothers were. Afterwards a fierce fight befell, wherein Grim slew Hrapp, and Kari smote down a strong man named Tjorvi; the rest prayed for peace, and Skarp-hedinn gave it to them. Howbeit Helgi was against the peacemaking, for he said, 'These men will never be true to us.' One of the men was Grani, Gunnar's froward son, and it was for his sake that the peace was made.

After Njal had paid down the blood-money which was awarded for these slayings, he took out a ring of gold, and calling Hauskuld, Thrain's son, to him, he set it on his hand, saying, 'Wilt thou take this as a gift from me?' The lad said, 'That I will; for though I know full well that Skarp-hedinn slew my father, he was greatly provoked to anger. Thou and thy sons are just men; the atonement has been fully paid, and I cannot bear malice against any of you.' Njal said, 'Thou hast answered well, and thou wilt live to be a good man and true.' Then he made Hauskuld the offer to take him for his foster-son, and the youth was glad thereat and went home with him to Bergthorsknoll. There he abode, and grew up with Njal and his sons, much beloved of them all, for he was exceeding comely and withal blithe and gentle and fair-spoken.

Now Hauskuld set his mind upon a maiden named Hildegunna, one of the fairest of women, but very proud and hard-hearted. She dwelt with her uncle Flosi. And being desired of Hauskuld to ask this maiden for him to wife, Njal came to Flosi and offered to lay down such money as he should deem fitting to make the match on behalf of his foster-son. Then Hildegunna being called in, said, 'Who is this man that he should think to wed with me? I will only wed with one who has the priesthood and who is a leader among men.' Wherefore Njal besought Flosi to let his niece tarry three winters for Hauskuld, the while they tried to get him a priesthood. And Flosi made that bargain.

All that winter Njal tried to get a priesthood and a leadership for his foster-son, but no man was found willing to sell his priesthood. Howbeit, when the Althing came on, it chanced that there was a great deal of talk about the four Quarter Courts being too few to settle the multitude of suits which were brought. So it fell out that a fifth court was named, and new priesthoods being set up Njal got the one at White-ness for Hauskuld, who was thenceforward called the Priest of White-ness. After that, Hildegunna was reconciled to a marriage with Hauskuld; so they were

wed and set up housekeeping at Ossaby. And there was the greatest of friendship between Hauskuld and Njal and all his sons. They bade each other to the harvest-feasts, and gave gifts to one another, and Njal's sons were always in Hauskuld's company.

Then came the change of faith, for King Olaf, being come to the throne of Norway, sent out men to christen the western isles. They preached the faith with spear and sword. Many repented at the spear point; some died in their sins, and some were saved; but most believed. In Iceland, where the people held so much by Njal, men came and asked his counsel, saying that it was a strange and a wicked thing to shake off the old faith in the gods. But Njal went away by himself and mused, and when he had long pondered he said, 'The flower is better than the seed, the fruit than the flower. Happy is he who knoweth that the flower is from the seed and who looketh for the fruit. You cannot hinder the new faith; but if you are wise you will help it, as I shall. What will be, will be.'

Now the court whereof Hauskuld was priest took in part of the district which had beforetime been in Mord's priesthood; and Mord was sore vexed at finding men continually declare themselves out of his Thing, and go over to Hauskuld's Thing; for which cause he began to bear ill-will against Hauskuld the Priest of White-ness. About the same time, Mord's father fell sick from old age, and being brought to his death-bed he said to his son, 'The money I leave thee is nothing to what it ought to be. We have scraped and saved in vain; for Skarphedinn impoverished us when he made us pay that heavy price for thy share in Gunnar's death. How he robbed us! O my son, remember this against him evermore. Let him smart for it, and I shall die in peace. Make friends with Njal and his sons, and so learn how best to wreak thy vengeance on them all. Promise me. They have got our gold.' Mord said, 'I promise. Leave that to me. But now, father, since thou art nigh to death, I would that thou shouldest repent, and shake off the old faith and take the new.' Then he brought to his father crosses and many other holy tokens and set them before his eyes. Valgard lifted himself fiercely in his bed, caught up the crosses in his hands and brake them to pieces, saying, 'I abide by the old faith, and I die and curse the thief which stole my gold.' So he breathed his last breath.

Then Mord began to devise how to be avenged at once on Hauskuld the Priest for coming into his district, and on Njal's sons; and the better to set them by the ears he made friends

with both. He bade Njal's sons and Kari to a feast, and when the feast was over he gave gifts to each, but the gift of greatest price he gave to Skarp-hedinn—a brooch of gold. Njal saw the gifts and said to his sons, 'Take heed; for they will be bought full dear. But most of all, beware how ye repay the giver in the coin he wishes to get.'

Then came Mord to Hauskuld, saying, 'Much it grieveth me to lay aught to the charge of any man, but I warn thee against Njal's sons, and most of all against Skarp-hedinn, for thou trustest him, the while his heart is not right concerning thee. He envies thee the priesthood. Knowest thou that he took it up for his own when thou camest not to the last Thing? He will never let it go.' 'Nay, Mord, thou art wrong,' said Hauskuld, 'for he gave it back to me at harvest-time.' 'Then Njal must have made him do it,' said Mord; 'for this I know, that Skarp-hedinn meaneth thee mischief. Hast thou forgotten his treachery when ye twain went together towards Marfleet; how an axe fell out from under Skarp-hedinn's belt?' Hauskuld answered, 'What of it? Was it not his woodman's axe? Spare thy words; for I have no mind to hear slanders against Njal's sons. They are my friends, and I would rather die at their hands than doubt them. But thou art all the worse man in my esteem for speaking thus concerning them.'

Then Mord went his way to Njal's sons, and said, 'What a double-faced man is Hauskuld! Who would believe it of one so fair-spoken! Yet he is always talking ill of you behind your backs. He says that Skarp-hedinn dealt treacherously by him, because forsooth a wood-axe fell from his belt on the way to Marfleet. Little do you know the man. Last time you feasted with Hauskuld do you remember where you slept?' 'Aye,' said Skarp-hedinn; 'the beds were made in three outhouses, because Hauskuld had pulled down his hall that he might build it anew.' 'True,' said Mord, 'but round about the outhouse wherein ye slept Hauskuld piled up faggots, and would have burned you all in your beds; but Hogni, Gunnar's son, came in the night and Hauskuld was afraid of him. And after ye were gone your ways Hauskuld sent out a band of men to fall upon you, only their courage failed them.' At first Njal's sons believed not his words—the tale perchance had too much circumstance—but day by day as Mord grew vaguer in his slanders, throwing out dark hints of treachery and ill-faith, the brothers doubted, and a coldness sprang up betwixt them and Hauskuld. Then Mord fed their misgivings so guilefully that in Hauskuld's sadness at their altered behaviour they only read his guilt.

Flosi came and abode awhile with Hauskuld, and hearing from his niece Hildegunna how things went with him and Njal's sons, he said, 'Get thee up and leave this part, and I will give thee a homestead away in Skaptarfell.' But Hauskuld said, 'Nay, wherefore should I flee? I have naught but kindness in my heart towards Njal's sons. Something unknown to me hath estranged us. They will presently learn the truth, and love me the better for never losing faith in them.' Then, seeing that he could not turn Hauskuld from his resolve, Flosi gave him a richly broidered cloak of scarlet and rode away. Hauskuld was greatly beloved of men, and he had no foes that he knew of save Njal's sons, whereat he grieved heavily.

One spring day at the seedtime of the corn, Bergthora heard Kari and her sons talking eagerly outside the house porch, and she said to her husband, 'What are they planning now?' Njal answered, 'I cannot tell; I am not in their counsels; but when their plans are good they seldom withhold them from me.'

That night Njal's sons went not to their beds. They took their weapons and coming out softly from the house met Mord at a trysting-place which they had appointed. Mord stirred them up to fall upon Hauskuld at once lest he should be beforehand with them; and they agreed amongst themselves that all should give him a wound and thereby set their hands to the slaying.

Now Hauskuld had risen up in the early morning. The sun was shining blithely, and he put on the scarlet cloak, Flosi's gift, and taking his corn sieve went into the fields to sow the corn. Njal's sons, together with Mord and Kari, lay in wait for him behind a fence, and when Hauskuld drew nigh the hedgerow, singing as he scattered his corn, Skarp-hedinn leapt out on him. Hauskuld saw him and sought to turn away. But Skarp-hedinn ran up to him, saying, 'Wouldst thou seek to slink away, thou sneaking Priest of White-ness?' and straightway hewed at him. The blow smote Hauskuld on the head; he fell upon his knees and spake these words: 'God forgive thee, Skarp-hedinn my friend, as I do!' And before he could say more the rest ran in, and all gave him wounds so that he died. Then Skarp-hedinn said, 'His blood is on all our hands.' Mord answered, 'That is true enough; nevertheless, I will fare home straightway and make as though I first heard the tidings from other folk, since by so doing I shall the better spy out how this slaying may be atoned.' 'Do as thou wilt,' said Skarp-hedinn, 'but forget not that we all had a share in this man's blood.'

Then the brothers went home to their father and told what

they had done. And straightway there fell a great heaviness upon Njal, insomuch that he bowed himself and wept and groaned aloud. He said, 'Better have lost two of my sons so Hauskuld were yet alive.' Skarp-hedinn answered, 'Thou art an old man; who shall blame thee for thy bitterness? For I know that thou lovedst Hauskuld passing well.' 'Nay,' said Njal, 'it is not that. In sooth I am old, and I loved Hauskuld well; but most of all I grieve foreseeing what shall come of it. All my life long I have gone in dread of a day like this. And now I know that a horrible death is surely at hand for me and my wife and all my sons.' Then said Kari, 'Hast thou naught to foretell for me?' Njal answered, 'Thy good luck is so great that it will be hard for any ill-fortune to overcome it.'

It was late that morning when Hildegunna awoke. She had dreamed ill dreams, and when she missed her lord from her side she sprang out of bed and called aloud to her servants, saying, 'Go search for Hauskuld; for evil is nigh him, or perchance has already overtaken him.' In haste she dressed herself and came down into the hall. And when she was come down, lo, there was something lying on the threshold wrapped in a broidered scarlet cloak. Hildegunna wept not; she was very calm. Mord's shepherd was by the porch, and seeing her, he came in and said, 'Mord bade me say that Njal's sons did this deed; in sooth many folk already have heard them boast of it.' 'A manly deed,' said Hildegunna, 'if one hand had done it.' She knelt and unwrapped her husband's body from the cloak. Her face grew dark and frowning; she never kissed the dead man's cheek; no tear of hers fell on his wounds. She took the scarlet cloak and wrapped it together, with the clots of blood yet in it; then laid it up in her chest.

The dead man's mother looked about for one to take up the suit for the slaying of her son. She fixed on Mord; would hear of none but Mord. Hildegunna demurred not; and Mord, feigning reluctance, at last consented. Then Mord brought neighbours with him and showed the body of Hauskuld wherein were five wounds. He named Skarp-hedinn, Grim, Helgi, and Kari as the dealers of four of the wounds, but of the fifth wound said he nothing, save that Skarp-hedinn had given the death-blow.

Men spoke ill of this slaying on all hands, calling it a foul deed and wrought without excuse, because Hauskuld had been gentle in his bearing and had made himself beloved of all folk. So it came to pass when Njal's sons went to and fro about the land seeking men to help them in the suit, that even their friends

looked coldly on them or promised at most to hold aloof. Nevertheless because of Njal and the great esteem wherein he was held there were yet found staunch folk to stand by him.

It was said that Hildegunna recked little of the slaying of her husband. She laid him in the earth and none heard her bewail, and after that she busied herself about house-tending and spake but little. But it chanced one day that her uncle Flosi journeyed to the homestead, and Hildegunna set him in her husband's seat and cumbered herself greatly to serve him. And it came to pass when Flosi had eaten his full, that Hildegunna arose, and going into the midst of the hall, loosed her hair about her face and brake out a-weeping. Flosi lounged upon the bench and said, 'Thou weepest for a good husband; but I shall follow up the suit, and I dare say we shall get an ample atonement in money for such a man.' Hildegunna turned on him fiercely, saying, 'Money? Suits? Talk not of such things. I will have blood.' Then she ran to her chest, and taking out the cloak, blood and all, as she had stripped it off Hauskuld's body, she came softly to Flosi while he dozed after meat, and flung it over his head, so that the clots of gore rattled down all about him. 'This was thy gift,' she cried, 'to Hauskuld; and now I give it back, charging thee before God to take vengeance for every wound which his dead body bare, or else to be adjudged a dastard evermore.' Flosi flung the cloak away. 'Thou grim hell-hag,' he cried; 'cruel are the counsels of women.' And Flosi came over by turns blood-red and ashen pale.

On a set day at the Thing men gathered to the Hill of Law from all parts in great multitudes to hear the suit of Mord and Flosi against Njal's sons for the slaying of the Priest of Whiteness. Folks said, 'Who is that tall, spare man, pale, sharp-visaged, with a face as rough as a sea-crag, who shows his front teeth and carries a great axe across his shoulder?' Others answered, 'That is Skarp-hedinn; he goes about among the booths seeking for some to stand by him in the suit.'

Men tried hard for Njal's sake to bring about an atonement, but Flosi was steadfast and would abide by nothing but the law.

Now the court being opened, Mord and Flosi set forth the indictment and called on Njal's sons to challenge the inquest. Then arose Thorhall the Lawman on their behalf, who said, 'This suit must needs fall to the ground inasmuch as it is brought by a man whose hands are not clean. At the showing of the death-wounds Mord only named the smiters of four of them.

Put on Hauskuld's body were five wounds; and I hereby impeach Mord as the giver of the fifth, whereby he made himself an outlaw, and as such is debarred from bringing this suit.' Then Njal stood up and said, 'It seems to me that according to law this suit must come to naught; but yet I would not have it ended by a quibble which will only increase the rancour between us. Truly Hauskuld was dearer to me than my own sons; and when I knew that he was slain the sweetest light of my eyes was quenched. I have grieved for him more bitterly than you all. And now I pray his kindred by our common grief that they will suffer me to make atonement. I pray Flosi that he will choose out men to utter an award. And let it be a liberal one, for I deem no price too great for one so dear as Hauskuld was to me; nor will I murmur though it cost me all whereof I am possessed and leave me destitute in my age.' Then many of the chief men interceded with Flosi, promising him their friendship if he would take an atonement. And after they had urged him long, Flosi consented that six men named on either side should utter an award; and all the folk at the Thing were glad thereat.

So twelve of the best men were left alone in the court to consider an award, and when they had determined what it should be, a bell was rung and all the people flocked to the Hill of Laws to hear Snorri the priest deliver the award on behalf of the twelve. He said, 'We have sought in this matter to fix the terms of a lasting peace, for which cause we have not awarded outlawry either from the district or from the land, seeing that banishments are for the most part ill-fulfilled and oftentimes kindle strife afresh. We award instead a money price greater than has heretofore been paid for any man. Hauskuld shall be atoned with triple man-fines, which will be six hundreds in silver; and the money must be all paid up here at the Thing. But of this price, lest bitterness should arise because of its greatness, we the awarders will pay one half, and we pray that each man of you will give something, for God's sake, and so for ever end the feud.'

Njal thanked the judges for this award, but Skarp-hedinn laughed scornfully and held his peace. Then the awarders laid down their three hundreds in silver; Njal and his sons and Kari mustered two hundreds between them, which was all they had; and the people gave so liberally that at last all the money was laid down in a heap. And Njal took off a rich silken scarf which he wore and laid that on the top of the heap.

Presently Flosi came up to count the money, and seeing the

scarf took it up and waved it about his head, crying aloud, 'Who gave this thing?' And when none spake he waved it again, and laughed, saying, 'Can no one tell who gave this rag?' Then Skarp-hedinn said, 'Who dost thou think has given it?' Flosi answered, 'Sooth to say I know of none that would own such women's gear save thy father the Beardless Carle, for it is hard to tell whether he be man or woman.' At that Skarp-hedinn's pale face flushed red, and he cried, 'Thou mayest soon learn that my father is a man, in that he has sons who can guard him from affront. But the reviler of an old man is neither man nor woman; wherefore I counsel thee to wear these, and hide thy shame'—therewith Skarp-hedinn flung a pair of breeches to him. Then Flosi waxed very wroth, and kicked the heap of money over, vowing he would not touch a penny of it, neither would he any longer make peace, but said he would have vengeance for Hauskuld instead. So the money was handed over to Gizur the White to take charge of, and the Thing broke up in confusion. Njal was very heavy at heart because the peace-making had thus been spoiled, and he said to Skarp-hedinn, 'It has all come to pass as I feared; for I foresaw from the first that evil would follow this suit.' Skarp-hedinn answered, 'There is naught to fear, for we are not outlawed, and they cannot pursue us by law.' Njal said, 'The worst that can happen to us is nigh at hand.'

Now Flosi rode away from the Thing and gathered men together, one hundred and twenty in all. He took an oath from every man to stand by him in the quarrel till the destruction of Njal and his sons should be accomplished; and when they had all pledged themselves with shaken hands they took counsel how best to bring it about.

One evening at the homestead of Bergthors-knoll Bergthora had an ill-foreboding, and she spake to her household, 'Choose now each of you what meat he likes best, for this is the last meal I shall ever set before you.' They smiled and said, 'This shall not be so.'

Now Grim and Helgi had gone that day to Holar, there to abide for a week, and Bergthora answered her household, saying, 'It shall be even as I have told you; and I give you this for a token, that Grim and Helgi will come home before the meal is done. If this come true, the rest will surely happen.' And when she had set the meat out on the board Njal suddenly said, 'Things have a wondrous seeming in my eyes to-night. I seem to see out into the home-field as though the gable wall of the house were down. And the board, with all the meat upon it,

seems one gore of blood.' Skarp-hedinn frowned, and spake about old age, and the enfeebling of the mind. But before the tables were cleared Grim and Helgi came home; and the house-folk whispered together and took it for a sign. Njal asked his sons why they came so soon. They said they could not tell—they had seen men riding hither and thither, and the whole country side seemed faring abroad—they knew not what it meant, and thought it better to be where Skarp-hedinn was.

That night from a vague foreboding none went to bed. Njal and his sons, with Kari and nearly thirty serving-men, stood out upon the threshold of the door and watched, till in the glooming twilight they saw men steal forth here and there and gather together into a mighty band. Njal saw them halt to hold counsel, and he said to Skarp-hedinn, 'They are far too many for us to deal with; wherefore it is my will that we all go indoors, for the house is strong. Remember how hard it was found to master Gunnar of Lithend though he was alone in his house. There are quite enough of us to keep them at bay if we remain within walls.' 'Nay,' said Skarp-hedinn, 'Gunnar, it is true, held out bravely, but that was because those chiefs who attacked him were too noble-minded to burn him in the house. But these men will stick at nothing. Nor do I blame them, for they know full well it will be their deaths if we escape. But as for me I have no mind to be stifled to death indoors.' Then Njal spake querulously, 'My sons are ever setting at naught my counsel, now that I am old. They did not always so.' So Helgi said, 'Let us do as our father wills.' 'Well,' said Skarp-hedinn, 'I for one am not afraid of death, and if ye are all agreed to humour our father by being burnt indoors along with him, I will not say nay.'

So they made fast the doors; and immediately afterwards Flosi and his men came thronging about the house. Then Skarp-hedinn and his brothers hurled out spears and wounded many men. One of Flosi's band, named Hroald, spied Skarp-hedinn at a window, and climbing up thrust a spear in at him, but Skarp-hedinn hewed off the spear-head, and the second blow of the axe smashed through Hroald's shield and into his face and beat him backwards, dead.

Flosi's men suffered greatly from the darts hurled out upon them, and seeing that they could do nothing in return, because the house was so stoutly built, Flosi said to his fellows, 'It is clear that we cannot get at them with weapons, and there remain but two choices for us. One is to turn away; and that is not

to be thought of since Njal's sons will certainly be avenged on us all for what we have done already. The other is to burn them in the house; and though that is a dreadful deed which we shall all have to answer for before God, it must be done.'

Then they brought wood and piled it round about the house, and set fire thereto, while Skarp-hedinn mocked them from the windows, saying, 'What, you scullions! are you going to take to cooking?' 'Aye,' answered one of them, 'and we shall give you little cause to complain of being under-done.' Skarp-hedinn looked at the man who said this and saw it was Grani, Gunnar's son. 'Grani,' he said, 'I avenged thy father; and this is my reward. God help thee; thou art a thankless fellow.'

Now the wood was green, and as fast as it was kindled the women within the house put it out by pouring down water and slops thereon. But hard by was a vetch stack, and Flosi's men fetched the dry fodder and filled the loft that was over the cross-trees of the hall therewith and set fire to it. And the inmates knew not of this till the hall was blazing overhead. At the same time piles of the vetches were kindled before all the doors until the wood took fire and began to burn fiercely. Then the women-folk within doors fell to bewailing themselves and weeping pitifully. But Njal comforted them, saying, 'Be of good cheer, for this is the last pain you shall ever have to endure.'

In a little while the whole house being kindled, Njal looked out of a window and calling to Flosi to come near, said, 'Wilt thou take atonement for my sons, or allow them to go out?' Flosi answered, 'I will take no atonement for them, but here I will remain until they are all dead. Nevertheless the women and the house-carles may come out.'

Then Njal called together the women and the serving-men and all who had leave to go. Thorhalla, Helgi's wife, wept bitterly at parting from her husband; and first would go, and then would die with him, then wept anew. But some of the other women persuaded Helgi to let them disguise him in a woman's cloak and kerchief; and being intreated very sore of his wife he yielded. So they came out, Helgi going in the midst of the women. But Flosi watched the door and cried to his men, 'A tall woman passed me, very broad across the shoulders; she is yonder; hold her.' Then Helgi flung away his cloak, and drew his sword. The first man that laid hands on him he cut down, but others ran in upon him, and Flosi came up and hewed off his head.

Then Flosi came back to the house and called for Njal and Bergthora. And when they were come to the window he said

Njal, thou art an old man, and I would not burn thee indoors. Thou shalt pass out free.'

Njal answered, 'I am too old to avenge my sons upon thee, but I could not live in shame. I will stay with them.' Then Flosi said to Bergthora, 'Do thou come out; for I would not have it on my soul that I burned a woman alive.' And he intreated her. But Bergthora said to him, 'I was very young when I was given to Njal, and then I promised him that nothing should ever part us twain. We have lived long together and nothing has parted us, nor ever shall.'

So they went back together, hand in hand, into the house. And Bergthora laid her head against Njal's shoulder and said, 'Husband, what shall we do?' He kissed her tenderly and answered, 'It is bed-time, dear one. It is time to rest.' So he led her to their chamber. A little boy, Kari's youngest son, was lying in their bed, and Bergthora went to lift him up to take him to another room; for she said to Njal, 'We cannot see the boy die before our eyes.' But the child said, 'Grandmother, I have always slept with you, and I would rather die with you and Njal than live afterwards.'

Then they laid them down in the bed and took the boy between them; and having signed themselves and the child with the cross, and committed their souls into God's hands, Njal called to his house-steward, who had not yet gone out, saying, 'Mark well how we lie, so that thou mayest afterwards be able to tell where to look for our bones; for we shall not stir hence for any pain or smart of burning. And now take yonder ox-hide from the wall and cover us therewith.' The steward took the hide, which came off an ox but newly killed, and having spread it over them, went out. That was the last that was seen or heard of Njal and Bergthora alive. Skarp-hedinn, when he knew from the steward how his father had laid himself down, said to his brother Grim, 'Our father goes early to bed. What wonder? He is an old man.'

Then Skarp-hedinn and Kari and Grim began to tear down the blazing timbers and to hurl out firebrands upon Flosi and his men. These cast spears at them, but the brothers caught the spears in their hands and flung them back again, till Flosi said, 'Forbear! the fire will overcome them fast enough.'

The heat grew stifling and the fire-forks crossed within the hall. All overhead was a fierce roaring sheet of flame, and ever and anon the great roof-beams came crashing down on fire, encumbering the place with blazing ruins. Skarp-hedinn said,

'Father must have died easily, for we have heard neither groan nor sigh from him.' Kari and Skarp-hedinn were by a window on the leeward side to get the air; and Kari said, 'Let us leap out here; the smoke blowing hitherward may give us a chance to get away unseen.' Skarp-hedinn answered, 'Do thou leap out first, and perchance if thou gettest off safe I will follow thee. If not, thou wilt avenge me.' Kari said, 'In sooth I will;' and snatching up a blazing bench, hurled it down among those who stood outside. These ran away, and Kari leapt out and crept along in the track of the smoke. But his hair and clothes were on fire, and some of the men seeing something pass, cried, 'Was not that a man leapt out at the roof?' 'Nay,' answered another, 'but much more likely a firebrand that Skarp-hedinn hurled at us.' So Kari got off safely and came to a stream wherein he threw himself to quench the fire that was on him.

Now Skarp-hedinn made a trial to get to the window to leap out, but the charred beams whereon he stood brake under him and threw him back on the fiery ruins. He got up, and leapt up to the window with a run, but the wall-plate came down with his weight and fell on him within the house. And after this the fire became so fierce upon the walls that there was no more getting nigh them. Then Skarp-hedinn and his brother Grim held one another by the hand and went about treading the fire; but when they came into the midst of the hall Grim fell down dead. Skarp-hedinn heard a shattering of the timbers overhead and ran to the end of the house. But the roof fell in with a mighty noise and jammed him fast against the gable so that he could neither move hand nor foot. For a moment the fallen roof choked the flames; the crackling sparks went up in clouds; then huge rolling billows of smoke belched up into the sky, and there broke out a-blaze. Loud roared the flames and all the place was wrapped in fire. But between whiles, as the flame-noise lulled, a man's voice was heard singing in the midst of the fire; and they which heard it marvelled greatly, for they thought Skarp-hedinn had been dead long before. They heard the voice for near a hour; then it ceased, and there was no sound but the crackling of the wood, the noise of falling timbers, and the uproar of the fire.

When the fire began to burn low there were some of Flosi's men who broke out rejoicing; but Flosi was sad and rebuked them, saying, 'Hold your peace. We must find something better to boast of than burning an old man in his house. And now I know of a truth that vengeance will be taken for this deed; wherefore it is my counsel that none of you go to your homes.

Not a man of us must part from the other henceforth, but do you all ride east with me.' So Flosi gathered together stores and provisions without stint, and all the Burners rode east with him to his homestead at Swinefell.

Now Kari came to Mord and told how he had escaped from the fire; and Mord having now seen his vengeance accomplished, and knowing that the people would be stirred up to anger against the Burners, gladly espoused his cause and promised him help. Then they got men together and came to Bergthors-knoll to search for Njal's bones. Kari showed them the spot, and when they had digged through a great heap of ashes they came upon the ox-hide charred and shrivelled. The hide was lifted, and lo, the bodies of Njal and Bergthora were bright and fair, and scarce the smell of fire had passed upon them. They lay as though they slept, and smiled in their sleep; and the child in like manner, save that one of his fingers was burnt where he had stretched it forth from beneath the ox-hide. Then the men sought for Skarp-hedinn in the place whence the sound of the singing had come. And they found his body betwixt the roof and the gable. He was jammed in upright, his legs burnt off to the knees; he had bitten through his under lip with the pain; his eyes were open, but proud and calm in their aspect. He had driven his axe up to the haft in the gable wall that the blade might not be softened. Over his breast he had laid his hands in a cross, and the fire had branded the crossed hands on his body. Men had no dread of Skarp-hedinn when they beheld him, but all said it was good to be near such a dead body. They found Grim's bones in the midst of the hall, and in other places the bones of four serving-men; in all nine souls.

When they had buried the dead, Mord began to take up suits on behalf of Njal's kinsmen against Flosi and the rest of the Burners. And first he summoned nine thanes who were Njal's neighbours on an inquest of outlawry against Flosi for the killing of Helgi. But a cunning lawyer named Eyjolf took up Flosi's cause. And when he had looked into the old statutes Eyjolf challenged four of the thanes on the ground that two of them by baptismal kinship with Mord were debarred from serving on the inquest; and other two, because instead of being separate house-holders they had only one hearth in common. Mord answered that, even if baptismal kinship were a hindrance like blood kindred, it went for nothing, he not being the real plantiff but only the pleader of the suit; and that the householder statute was annulled by the later law which laid down that a man may sit on an inquest who is worth three hundreds in land and dairy

stock. But the Speaker of the Law adjudged that kinship with the pleader was unlawful, inasmuch as the pleader was for the time being the real plantiff; and he also laid down that the old statute as to separate householding was not set aside but only added to by the newer law concerning money qualification. So it fell to the five thanes only to give judgment, and they found Flosi guilty. But their finding came to naught, for Eyjolf showed that the suit ought to have been brought in the Northlanders' Court instead of the Eastfirthers', and he therefore uttered protest against the judges giving judgment. And other suits being brought on for the Burning, Eyjolf brought every trick and quibble of law to bear on Flosi's behalf, so that these also fell to the ground. Yet still new suits went dragging on from court to court on different issues, until it came to this—the great wrong of the Burning had long ceased to be the matter in dispute, and the only quibble that was wrangled over at the Althing was whether one of two lawyers, Mord or Eyjolf, was guilty of contempt of court.

But Kari and Njal's kinsmen got many powerful friends who held it shame that a great wrong unredressed should dwindle down to a mere squabble betwixt lawyers. And at last, wearied with daily waiting about the courts, they drew their swords at the Althing and made a great onslaught on the Burners. Then the Court of Laws brake up in haste. Snorri the Priest and Skapti Speaker of the Law threw down their parchments and seized bill and axe; and men were fighting all about. The booths were overturned and great was the tumult. Kari with his great two-handed sword Life-luller hewed many of the Burners down, and Njal's kinsmen fought so fiercely that at last Flosi and his folk had to turn and flee across Axe-water. There Flosi drew up his men, and during a lull in the battle he began to think within himself of what he had brought on Njal and what he was bringing on the land. And he sent a messenger to Kari's people, saying, 'I have sinned against you all; but I will make atonement. Choose whom you will to utter an award and I will abide by it. Only let not the land be divided against itself for my fault.'

So the matter was left to twelve chief men, and Snorri the Priest delivered their award. Triple fines were to be paid for Njal, and double fines for Bergthora and Grim and Helgi. Skarphedinn's death was to be set over against that of Hauskuld, Priest of White-ness; and single fines were awarded for all others which had been burnt in the house. The Burners were all to go away

into banishment or be proclaimed outlaws, and Flosi was besides to make a pilgrimage to Rome.

Flosi heard the award and was content; nor would he so much as put a price on the wounds which he had got in the affray.

So the settlement was made, and it was well kept afterwards. Flosi sailed away and came to Rome, where he abode a long while, doing penance and getting his soul in health. As for the Burners, some failed to go abroad, and Kari and Njal's kinsmen hunted and slew them; moreover they tracked the Burners into other lands and hunted them there. Of the rest some fell in far countries, and many more were overtaken by ill-haps on sea and land.

Years afterwards, when Flosi had fulfilled the time of his banishment and had gotten absolution from the Pope's own hand, he came back to Iceland and dwelt at his farmstead in Swinefell. He was waxed graver and gentler than his wont and seldom spake much. Kari still went about hunting the Burners, giving them no rest. Yet when Flosi heard of the deaths of any of them he would go forth peaceably, and, seeking out their bodies, would bestow much money on their funerals; but none ever heard him utter a wrathful word against Kari. Nevertheless for all this Kari thought that he had not taken vengeance enough.

But it fell out once when Kari was out at sea that a storm drave his vessel against the rocks off Swinefell. Kari and his men saved nothing but their lives; and when they had swum ashore the storm raged wilder. Then they said one to another, 'What shall we now do for food and shelter, for we are on Flosi's land and have no weapons?' And Kari said, 'This will we do; we will go up to Swinefell and put Flosi's manhood to the proof.' So they went up, drenched as they were and with scarce a rag upon their backs, and stood at Flosi's door. And when Flosi beheld Kari he knew him immediately and brought him in and kissed him. With his own hands he clothed him in the best raiment that he had.

So Kari and Flosi were made friends, and the Burning was atoned. And in aftertime when Kari's wife Helga died, he wedded Flosi's niece Hildegunna, who was beforetime the wife of Hauskuld Priest of White-ness.

INDEX.

Aachen, 203 *et seq.*, 330.
Accolon, 9, 16, 17 *et seq.*
Achar, 231.
Ægir, 382.
Æschere,
Æsir, 256, 375.
Æthelred, 463.
Aglavale, 56.
Agnar, 256.
Agravaine, 4, 101 *et seq.*
Alberich the Dwarf, 277, 285, 298. (*See* Andvari.)
Aldrian, 303.
Alf, 247, 268.
Ali, 422.
Alice, the Fair Pilgrim, 57.
Alisander, 57 *et seq.*
Allegorical visions, 76, 77, 81, 83.
Allegories, 74.
Allfather, 374.
Alory, 226.
Alphar, 316.
Alroy, forest of, 20.
Al-sirat, bridge of, 11.
Alswid, 257.
Amant, 55.
Amiraunt, 174.
Amys of the Mountain, 171.
Andred, 47, 53.
Andvari, 251, 258. *See* Alberich.
Angantyr, 386.
Anglides, 57.
Angurvadel, 381.
Angys the Dane, 115.
Anlaf, 175.
Annowre, 51.
Anseis, 203.
Ansirus, 57.
Antzius, 333.
Aragus, 177.
Aries the cowherd, 13.
Arnbiorn, 409.
Arnor, 424.
Arthur, birth and early years of, 2.
—— crowning of, at Rome, 24.
—— the Emperor, 23.
Arthur the giant-slayer, 24.
—— and Guenevere,
—— imprisonment of, 16.
—— loves of, 4.
—— and Olger, 234.
—— subordination of, 7, 54, 105.
—— sword of, 2, 5, 17.
—— and Tristram, 54, 60.
—— visions of, 110.
—— wedding of, 12 *et seq.*
Arundel, 144, 150, 160.
Ascapard, 151, 156, 157.
Asdis, 400, 411, 451.
Asgard, 256, 374.
Asmund, 400.
Astolat, the Fair Maid of, 93 *et seq.*
Athelstan, 165.
Athelwold, 179 *et seq.*
Atli, 262.
—— the Viking, 388.
—— son of Osmund, 400.
Aubry, 171.
Audun, 404.
Aurilisbrosias, 115, 119.
Avalon, or Avilion, Vale of, 112, 234

Bagdemagus, 15, 73.
Baldur, 348, 374.
Baldwin, 3, 23, 56.
—— son of Ganelon, 207.
—— son of Olger, 229.
Baligant, 218.
Balin and Balan, 89 *et seq.*
Balmung, 277, 293.
Ban, 4.
Barham Down, battle of, 110.
Barnard, 174.
Basant, 205.
Baseborn boy, the. (*See* Boots and Beggars.)
Basil, 205.
Bedegraine, Castle of, 4.
Bedivere, Sir, 110.
Beggars in Mythology, 7, 181.
Bekkhild, 257.
Belé, 373 *et seq.*

Beliagog, 135.
Bellerophon, 135.
Belleus, 28.
Bellisande, 224.
Bendelaine, 40.
Benoist, 230.
Benwick, 107.
Beowulf, 189 *et seq.*
Beranger, 213.
Berchtung of Meran, 333.
Bergthora, 474.
Bernard, 93.
Bernard Brown, 186.
Bertram, 183.
Bessi, 409.
Bevis of Hamtoun, 140 *et seq.*
Bifröst, bridge of, 11.
Bikki, 273.
Biorn, slain by Grettir, 407.
Birkabeyn, 181.
Bjorn, 382.
Blaise, 4, 119.
Blamor de Ganis, 45.
Blancandrin, 202 *et seq.*
Blancheflor, 123, 164.
Bleeding spear, the, 90.
Bliant, 67.
Blödel, 308.
Blood, the tribute of, 86.
Boar, the, 143.
—— the wound of the, 67.
Boniface, 145, 151.
Borghild, 245, 248.
Borre, 4.
Bors, 4, 65, 94, 113.
—— temptation of, 82.
Brademond, 144.
Bradwin, 151.
Branquemond, 233.
Branstock, 241.
Bredi, 240.
Breidablick, 374.
Brengwaine, 46 *et seq.*, 254.
Brennor, 46, 49.
Broceliande, 122.
Bruhier, 232.
Bryant of Cornwall. 159.
Brynhild, 255 *et seq.*
—— of the Nibelungenlied, 281 *et seq.*
Budli, 260.
Burnt Njal, 474.
Busil-tarn, 250.

CAERLEON, 3.
Camelot, 7.
Canados, 136.
Canterbury, bishop of, 109, 113.
Carados, 26.
Carahen, 225 *et seq.*
Carbonek, 77.
Carlisle, bishop of, 106.
Cart, knight of the, 98.
Carteloise, 86.
Castle Balian, 346.
Castor, 68.
Chapel, Perilous, 27.
Charles the Great, 202 *et seq*
Charlot, 228.
Cheapside, Bevis in, 159.
Clarice, 231, 236.
Claudas, 4.
Cloud-cloak, the, 283 *et seq.*
Cnut, 432.
Colbrand, 176.
Colgrevance, 84, 102.
Constantine, 23.
Constaunce, 115.
Corbin, the Maid of, 63.
Corsuble, 225.
Courtain, 228.
Crosslet, the red, 337

DAG, 248.
Damas, 16.
Dannemont, 225.
Dankwart, 276, 283, 308.
Darkness, snake of, 110.
David, sword of, 86.
De la Rowse, Duke, 40.
Delectable Isle, the, 59.
Devil's dam, 196, 19.
Didier of Lombardy,
Dietrich, 305.
Dimilioc, 1.
Dinadan, 53, 56 *et seq.*
Disir, 253.
Disirsaal, 380.
Divoun, 140, 153 *et seq.*
Dolorous Gard, 107.
—— stroke, 7.
Dragon-slayers, the, 64, 152, 169, 173, 198.
Dragons and streams, 118.
—— of Cola and Calabria, the, 152.
Drogo, 327.
Dröpnir, 377.
Dumb Maiden, the, 56.
Durendal, 211

ECGTHEOW, 191.
Eckefrit, 324.
Eckewart, 301.
Ector, 2, 52, 114.
Edgar, 156.
Einar, 419.
Elaine, the Fair Maid of Astolat, 93 *et seq.*
—— the mother of Galahad, 64, 88.

Elaine, the wife of Ban, 14.
Elf-child, the, 117.
Eliazar, 89.
Eliot, 155-56.
Elizabeth, 41.
Ellide, 382 *et seq.*
Engeler of Gascoigny, 213.
Eric of Norway, 405.
Ermonie, 123.
Ermyn, 143, 159.
Ernis, 168.
Erp, 274.
Ettard, 21.
Etzel, 300, 316 *et seq.*
Eve, spindles of, 86.
Excalibur, 17, 19, 24, 111.
Eyjolf, 504.
Eylimi, 246.

Fafnir, 250.
Faith, ship of, 86.
Faldrun, 214.
Faramond, 223.
Fatal Children, 41.
—— Sisters, 20, 112.
Felice, 162 *et seq.*
Feng, 252.
Fenrir, 375.
Fiolnir, 252.
Five Kings, defeat of the, 15.
Florentin, 135.
Florentine, 152, 172.
Flosi, 491 *et seq.*
Fortager, 115 *et seq.*
—— Castle of, 116.
Frammnäs, 381, 389.
Frigga, 374, 394.
Frithiof, 373 *et seq.*
—— treasures of, 381.
—— the Madman, 391.
—— the Beggar, 392.
Freya, 240, 374, 394.
Freyr, 393.
Frute, 346.

Gahalatine, 26.
Gaheris, 4, 26, 104.
Gaire, 167.
Galagars, 15.
Galahad, 63, 76 *et seq.*
—— and Lancelot, 87.
—— son of Brennor, 46.
—— well of, 89.
Gamelo of Metz, 323.
Ganelon, 205 *et seq.*
Ganhardin, 136 *et seq.*
Ganzblick, 348.
Gareth, 4, 28 *et seq.*, 104.
Garlon, 10,
Gaulter, 214.
Gawaine, *et seq.*, 4, 13, 20, 103 *et seq.*, 107.
—— death of, 109.
—— vow of, 72, 104.
—— wounding of, 108.
Geáts, 191.
Geir, 479.
Gelfrat, 303.
Geoffrey of Anjou, 203.
—— Abbot of St Faron de Meaux, 286.
Geography, mythical, 3.
Gerard, 204.
Gerin, 204.
Gerlinda, 354.
Gernot, 276, 293.
Gerwich, 325.
Giaflaug, 266.
Giant-slayers, 26, 149.
Gibich, 316 *et seq.*
Gilbert, 28.
Gimo, 324.
Giselher, 276, 293.
Gisli, 432.
Giuki, 258.
Giukings, slaughter of the, 271.
Gizur the white, 479.
Glam, 411.
Glasir, 376.
Glaumvor, 269.
Glistening Heath, 250.
Glorian, 223.
Gloriande, 227.
Godard, 181.
Godfrey, 222 *et seq.*
Godrich, 180.
Goldborough, 179 *et seq.*
Gorlois, 1.
Gotelind, 304.
Grail, the, 63.
Gram, 251.
Grander, 149.
Grani, 261, 250.
Grani, Gunnar's son, 483.
Granmar, 248.
Green Lawns, Knight of the, 31.
Grendel, 192 *et seq.*
—— mother of, 195.
Grettir, 400 *et seq.*
Griflet, 15.
Grim, the fisherman, 182 *et seq.*
—— Thorhallson, 423.
—— the Outlaw, 429.
—— son of Njal, 474.
Grimhild, 258, 268.
Gringamore, 35.
Gouvernajl, 127.
Gripir, 252.
Gudbiorg, 416.

Gudrun, 21, 258 *et seq.*, 268.
—— daughter of Hettel, 351 *et seq*
Guenevere, 12, 65, 97 *et seq.*
—— and Lancelot, 97 *et seq.*, 112.
—— and the lion, 50.
—— dower of, 12.
Guest, 434, 440.
Guichard, 166.
Guise, 213.
Gullrond, 266.
Gunild, 188.
Gunnar, 261.
—— brother of Biorn, 409.
—— of Lithend, 474.
Gunnlaug, 458.
Gunter, 166.
Gunther, 276 *et seq.*, 294.
—— son of Siegfried, 290.
—— son of Gibicho, 316 *et seq.*
Gurmoise, 171.
Guttorm, 258, 265.
Guy of Hamtoun, 140.
—— of Warwick, 162 *et seq.*
—— son of Bevis, 160.
Gyrid, 419.

Hacon, 490.
Hadawart, 325.
Hæring,
Haflidi, 402.
Hagan, 276 *et seq.*, 291, 305.
Hagbard, 258.
Hagen, 321.
—— and the Griffins, 341.
Hahnir, 251.
Haki, 258.
Halfdan, 249.
Halfdan, son of Belé, 379.
Hallfred, 467.
Hallgerda, 475.
Hallgrim, 480.
Hallmund, 432.
Haltclere, 214.
Ham, 387.
Hamdir, 274.
Hamund, 245.
Harald, 457.
Harald Fair-hair, 474.
Hartmuth, 351 *et seq.*
Haunter of Shady-vale, 413.
Hauskuld, 475.
Havelok, 181 *et seq.*
Healer,
—— Isolte, or Ysonde, the, 135 *et seq.*
—— Lancelot, the, 28.
Healfdene, 189.
Heideger, 334.
Heimir, 257.
Hel, 275, 375.
Helche, 300, 317 *et seq.*
Helfied, 181.
Helfrich, 313.
Helga, 458 *et seq.*
Helgi Hundingsbane, 41 *et seq.*, 245, 248.
Helgi, son of Belé, 379.
—— the Scathe of Hadding, 249.
—— Njal's son, 474.
Hellawes, 28.
Helm-Gunnar, 256.
Helmnot, 313, 326.
Heming, 467.
Heorot, 190.
Heraud of Ardennes, 297, 303, 307.
Herb, the holy, 100.
Herborg, 266.
Heregard, 360 *et seq.*
Hermanec, 159.
Hermes,
—— rod of,
Heroes, bondage of,
—— vulnerable only in one spot, 215.
Herrich, 316.
Hervise, 15.
Herwig, 351 *et seq.*
Hettel, 347
Heyd, 387.
Hialti, 442.
Hiarandi, 409.
Hierodouloi,
Higelac, 191, 197.
Hilda, 217 *et seq.*, 332.
—— daughter of Hagen of Ireland, 346 *et seq.*
Hildebrand, 313.
Hildeburg, 333, 360.
Hildegund, 316 *et seq.*
Hildegunna, 495.
Hilding, 373 *et seq.*
Hindfell, 255.
Hjalprek, 247.
Hjalti, 271.
Hjärrandi,
Hjordis, 246, 250.
Hlymdale, 256.
Hnikar, 252.
Hoard, the Golden, 298, 317.
Hodbrod, 248.
Hoder, 376.
Hogni, 248, 258.
Holy Grail, the, 64, 72.
Horant, 343.
Horn, the magic, 34, 47, 211, 213.
Horse, enchanted, 233.
Howel, 42 *et seq.*
Hrapp, 490.
Hreidmar, 251.
Hrethel, 191, 197.

Hrimnir, 240.
Hrothgar, 189.
Hranting, 195.
Hrut, 475.
Hubert, 236.
Hugdietrich, 333 *et seq.*
Hugh Raven, 185.
Huginn, 374
Hugo, 166.
Hunding, 248.
Hungerd, 468.
Hunold, 276.
Hygelac. (*See* Higelac.)

Igerne, 1.
Illugi, 411 *et seq.*, 449.
—— the Black, 460.
Injebjorg, 373.
Ironside, 37.
Isenstein, 282.
Isolte (Ysonde) the Fair, 59, 127 *et seq.* 136.
—— (Ysonde) of the White Hands, 48, 136.
Issland, 281.

Jofrid, 459.
Jokul, 403.
Jonakr, 273.
Jonas, 174.
Jormunrek, 273.
Joseph of Arimathea, 89.
Josian, 143, 161.
Jötuns, 190.
Joyous Gard, 58, 60, 103.
Joyous Isle, 68.

Kara, 249.
Kari, 495.
Karl the Great, 223.
Karr the Old, 404.
Kehydius, 52, 63.
Keingala, 400.
King of Ireland, 43, 45.
—— of the Lake, 22.
Kinkenadon, Castle of, 28, 41.
Knight, the best in the world, 11, 17, 63, 64, 71, 75.
—— of the Ill-shapen Coat, 49 *et seq.*
—— of the Red Lawns, 37.
Knights who fail, the, 34.
Kolskegg, 480.
Kormak, 416.
Kostbera, 269.
Kriemhild, 276 *et seq.*

Lady of the Lake, 6, 8, 17, 93.
Lamorak, 5, 47, 49, 51.
Lancelot, 14 25, 85, 97, 109.
—— healing power of, 97.
—— humiliation of, 81.
—— madness of, 64.
—— and Olger, 234.
—— and Tristram, 54.
Lanceor, 8.
Laurel, 41.
Lavaine, 93, 99.
Leodegrance, 12.
Liebgart, 333.
Linet, 40.
Lionel, 25 *et seq.*, 82 *et seq.*, 105.
Liones, 33 *et seq.*, 41.
Ljod, 240
Loathly Lady, 157.
Loki, 251, 375.
Lombard, Earl, 166.
Lonazep, Castle of, 59.
Loret, 168.
Lorraine, Duke of, 170 *et seq.*
Love-drink, 46, 128, 254.
Lucan, 110.
Ludegast, 100, 279.
Ludeger, 100, 279.
Ludwig, 351, 369.
Lykanthropy, 244
Lyngi, 246.

Madness of Lancelot, 64.
—— of Tristram, 52.
Mador of the Gate, 26, 92.
Maidens, Castle of the, 75.
Malcolm, 478.
Malgrin, 57.
Manassen, 19.
Marganices, 214.
Marhaus, 20 *et seq.*, 44 *et seq.*
Mark of Cornwall, 9, 42 *et seq.*, 55, 134 *et seq.*
Marsilius, 202 *et seq.*
Matalan Castle, 354, 371.
Maurice of Mounclere, 155.
Meleagros,
Meliagrance, 97 *et seq.*
Melias, 74.
Meliodas, 41.
Meliora, 223.
Meliot, 28.
Meriadok, 131.
Merlin, 1, 117 *et seq.*
Miles, 157.
Milo, 154.
Mimir, well of, 25, 331.
Mistletoe, the fatal, 376.
Modrain,
Mombraunt, 148
Moradin, 233.
Morage, 142.

Moraunt, 126.
Mord, 478.
Mordred, 6, 26, 101 *et seq.*
—— and Guenevere, 109.
—— death of, 111.
Morgadour, 168.
Morgan, 123.
—— le Fay, 5, 9, 17 *et seq.*, 47, 53, 57.
Morglay, 144.
Morloise, 87.
Morung, 346, 361.
Moyne, 115.
Moysant, 232.
Muninn, 374.
Mythical heroes, madness of, 49.
—— —— subordination of, 29 *et seq.*
—— —— temptation of, 76 *et seq.*
—— names,

Nabon, 49.
Nacien, 82.
Nagling, 197.
Nanna, 13, 374.
Nastrond, 395.
Naymes, 205 *et seq.*
Nibelung, Story of the, 133 *et seq.*, 276 *et seq.*
Niblung, 272.
Nicors, 191.
Nidhoggr, 375.
Niflheim, 395.
Nigramous, Castle, 28.
Nimue, 14, 51, 112.
Niniame (or Nimue), 122.
Njal, 28, 474 *et seq.*
Noise, 441.
Norns, 321.

Oberon, 234.
Odenwald, 293.
Odin, 42, 240, 249, 374.
Olaf, Saint, 416.
Olger the Dane, 210 *et seq.*, 223 *et seq.*
Oliver, 203 *et seq.*
Ontzlake, 16.
Onund Sjoni, 462.
Onund Treefoot, 416.
Onund of Mossfell, 461.
Orkney, King of, 4, 9.
—— Queen of, 4, 38.
Ortlieb, 302.
Ortrun, 370 *et seq.*, 358.
Ortwin, 355.
Ortwine, 276, 331.
Osile, 170.
Otho of Pavia, 164 *et seq.*
Otkell, 477.
Otter's skin, the, 251.
Ovand, 225.

Palamides, 43, 59 *et seq.*, 70.
Palestina, 223.
Pandaros, 324.
Papillon, 233.
Pase, Earl of, 57.
Patafrit, 325.
Patrise, 92.
Pellam, 10.
Pelleas, 21 *et seq.*
Pelles, 87.
Pellinore, 6, 13.
Pendragon Castle, 51.
—— Uther, 115, 119 *et seq.*
Percivale, 5, 76 *et seq.*
—— sister of, 86.
Perilous Castle, the, 36.
—— chapel, the, 27.
—— pass, the, 30.
—— seat, the, 13, 63, 70.
Perin of Montbeliard, 10,
Persant of Inde, 32.
Persis of the Forest, 25.
Pescheur, 75.
Peticrewe, 134.
Pillars or rods.
Pinabel, 220 *et seq.*
Pinel, 92.
Poisoned weapons, 44, 48, 127, 133.
—— robes, 20.
Potenhithe, 159.
Prettyhands, 29 *et seq.*
Pristina, 223.

Queen of Eastland, 25.
—— of Orkney, 4, 38, 56.
—— of the Out Isles, 26.
—— of the Waste Land, 112.

Rafn, 461.
Ran, 394.
Randolf, 326.
Randver, 273.
Rannveig, 480.
Raynburn, 177.
Redbeard, 430.
Redesoun, 144.
Red Lawns, Knight of the, 29 *et seq.*
Regin, 250.
Regnier, 235.
Reidmar, 251.
Reignier, 164.
Rerir, 240.
Reyner of Chester, 188.
Ring, the magic, 39 *et seq.*, 148, 235.
—— King, 383 *et seq.*
—— the mystic, 251, 262.
Ringhorne, 377.
Robe, the poisoned, 20.
Robert the Red, 185.

Rohand, 123 *et seq.*, 164.
Roland, 202 *et seq.*
—— Rise, 123.
Rome, Emperor of, 5, 23.
Roncesvalles, battle of, 210 *et seq*
Rota, 394.
Round Table, the, 12, 76, 121.
—— knights of the, 12, 73.
Rudeger, 304.
Rumold, 276.
Ryons, 6, 8 *et seq.*

Saber, 141, 157.
Sadok, 57, 167 ; (Sadoc).
Sadonne, 227.
Sails, black and white, 133.
Salgofnir, 249.
Sam, 484.
Sampson, 203.
Sanam, daughter of Earl, 4.
Sangreal, the, 64, 72, 85.
Sarras, city of, 87.
Saurli, 274.
Scabbard, the magic, 6, 17, 19.
Scef, 189.
Schilbung, 277.
Schwemmelein, 302.
Scyld, 189.
Segard, 162.
Segwarides, 44, 49, 53.
Segwin, 167.
Sessoins, 56.
Ship of Baldur, 377.
—— of faith, 85.
—— of the dead, 59, 90.
Siege Perilous, the, 13, 63.
Siegfried, son of Gunther, 288.
—— 277 *et seq.*
—— the Horned, 277.
—— of the Moorland, 261, 277 *et seq.*
Sieglind, 277, 351 *et seq.*
Siegmund, 277 *et seq.*
Sigar, 258.
Sigeband, 341.
Siggeir, 241.
Sigi, 240.
Sigmund, 241, 476.
Signy, 241.
Sigrun, 248.
Sigtrygg, 464.
Sigurd, 250.
—— Bishop, 423.
—— of Micklegarth, 453 *et seq.*
Simon, Abbot, 236.
Sindold, 279.
Sinfjötli, 243.
Sisters, the fatal, 20.
Siza, Pass of, 209 *et seq.*
Skald-Torfa, 409.
Skamkell, 477.
Skapti, 426 *et seq.*, 466.
Skaramund, 324.
Skarp-hedinn, 477.
Skeggi. 402.
Slaughter, Hall of, 310.
Sleipnir, 244, 250.
Snakes, in mythology, 147.
—— and weasels, 110.
Snœkoll, 419.
Snorri, 504.
Solomon, bed of, 86.
Soté, 381.
Spear, the mystic, 65, 90.
Spes, 452 *et seq.*
Spiritual place, the, 87.
Stein, 450.
Steinar, 462.
Steinvor, 437.
Stone, the magic, 148.
Svein, 423.
Sverting, 468.
Swanborough, 181.
Swanhild, 273.
Swan-maidens, 303.
Sword, the naked, 71.
—— of Balin, 7.
—— of Bevis, 144.
—— of Tristrem, 127.
Syrak, 151.

Taillefer, 222.
Tannenast, 327.
Tedbald of Rheims, 204.
Terry, 146 *et seq.*
Thierry, 170 *et seq.*
Thiostolf, 475.
Thor, 393.
Thorbiorg, 428.
Thorbiorn Oxmain, 416, 424.
—— Angle, 449.
—— the Tardy, 416.
Thord, 476.
Thorfinn of Haramsey, 403.
Thorgaut, 413.
Thorgeir, 420, 423.
Thorgerd, 459.
Thorgils, 425.
Thorgrim, 462.
Thorhall, 411.
—— the Lawman, 496.
Thorhalla, 475.
Thorir of the Pass, 420.
—— the Berserk, 418.
Thorkel, 401, 408, 431, 472.
Thormod, 425.
Thorod, 440.
—— Drapna-stump, 427.
Thorold, 165.

Thororm, 464.
Thorstein Dromond 409, 452.
—— Kuggson, 432.
Thorsten, 373 *et seq.*
—— Egilson, 458.
Thrain, 491.
Thurid, 449.
Tierry, 220.
Tintagel Castle, 1, 52.
Tjorvi, 500.
or, 13 *et seq.*
Torch of Olger, 235.
Tramtrist, 43, 127.
Treasure, lost or stolen, 197.
—— the Lost, 305, 314.
—— of Fafnir, the, 254.
—— of Frithiof, 381.
Triamour, 133, 174.
Trinchesis, 149.
Tristram, 42 *et seq.*, 123 *et seq.*
—— and Arthur, 60.
—— and Lancelot, 53.
—— and Palamides, 63.
—— banishment of, 54, 133.
—— death of, 103, 139.
—— madness of, 49, 137.
—— sculptured hall of, 136.
—— treachery of, 132.
—— the dragon-slayer, 128.
—— the harper, 43, 125.
—— the huntsman, 43, 125.
—— the stranger, 137.
—— in the Norse ship, 124.
Trolls, 378.
Turpin, 204 *et seq.*
Turquine, 26.
Twelve Peers, the, 212 *et seq.*
Two Brothers, 9.
—— Swords, knight of the, 7.

Ubbe, 185.
Ulfin, 1.
Urgen, 133.
Uriens, 15, 20.
Urre of Hungary, 101.
Urry, 164.
Uta, 115, 276, 280.
—— wife of Sigeband, 341.
Uther Pendragon, 1, 115, 119.
Uwaine 17 *et seq.*
—— les Avoutres, 81.

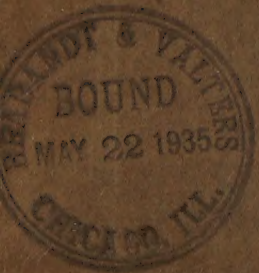
Valgard,
Valhalla, 249, 375.
Veillantif, 211.
Vermund, 428.
Vingi, 270.
Visions, allegorical, 118.
Vivian, 222.
Volker, 276, 279, 308.
Volsung, 241, 245.

Waegmunding, 193.
Walgund, 333.
Walter of Aquitaine, 316 *et seq.*
Wanderers in mythology, 6.
Waschenstein, 325.
Wate, 346 *et seq.*
Wayland, 381, 191.
Wealtheow, 192.
Weapons, mythical, 2, 7, 72. 144.
—— poisoned, 44, 90, 127, 133.
Weasel, the, 175.
Weeping Castle, the, 46.
Weird Sisters, 20, 112.
Werbel, 309.
Werinhard, 144.
White Castle, 67.
Wight, Isle of, 146, 157.
Wiglaf, 199.
William Wendut, 185.
Windhelm, Bridge of, 250.
Wishing Rod, the Golden, 299.
Woden, Odin, 331.
Wolf, the She, 243.
Wolfbrand, 313.
Wolfdietrich, 338.
Wolfhart, 313.
Wolfwine, 313.
Wolves of Odin, 375.
Worms in Mythology, 254.
Wulpensand, 361.

Xanten, Castle of, 276.

Yggdrasil, 326.
Ynor, 148, 158.
Yrolt, 346.
Ysonde the Fair. (*See* Isolte.)
Yumala, 338.

Zaragoz, 218.
Zio, 331.


BOUND
MAY 22 1935